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BOB RYALLS



Bob Ryalls

Clubman : Lover : Gambler

An
Anglo-American
Story



BY
J^h. ALEX. SHERIDAN

Author of "THE KANGAROO"
"RISKING THE HAZARD," Etc.

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BOB RYALLS,

AN ANGLO-AMERICAN STORY

CHAPTER I.

“ROBINSON, this is a chance of a lifetime. Do as I tell you and you’ll make a fortune. I have just received in cipher a cable dispatch telling me not to sell any more stock, as they have struck a vein of virgin ore. Not a soul in the world at present, besides ourselves and the company, know of this rich strike, and though it may possibly leak out in a week or so, in the meantime you could make the rounds of the people who hold Jack-Pot stock, and load up with it before the news arrives in England. Whether you go into this or not, don’t breathe a word of what I have told you to anybody. You’ve been a good friend to me, Robinson, and I wish to repay you for your kindness, and this, I consider, is the best chance you will ever have to become rich.”

* * * *

The speaker was the agent for the Jack-Pot Gold Mining Company, of Black Hawk, Colorado, U. S. A.

Telling the agent he would think it over, Robinson sat back in his chair and commenced to ponder on the outcome of investing in the stock.

Lawyer Robinson had married and settled down in Oxtan, a suburb of Birkenhead, having his office in Liverpool. He was naturally a very ambitious man,

but unfortunately was handicapped with a wife whose sole ambition in life was to shine in society; and in this vainglorious desire, had made her husband little less than a dray-horse, sapping all ambition. When he earned an unusually large fee, and had made up his mind to put some of the money away as a nest-egg, his wife, by her constant nagging, allowed him no peace of mind until she had obtained it, in order that she might purchase some elaborate piece of furniture for the Robinson residence.

This stock speculation in which the mining agent had been urging him to invest, during the past six months, while the stock was quoted at a very low figure, was a thing that he could not now go into lightly; he had neglected the opportunity; now, when the news of the rich strike of ore in the mine arrived in Liverpool, the stock would jump to an unknown figure. He instantly saw there was no alternative but to plunge if he wished to realize the dream of his life—to become rich.

Robinson was treading on dangerous ground—ground adroitly covered to conceal the quick-sands of the stock market.

While in this unsettled state of mind, and still being urged by the mining agent to plunge, his sister and her husband called upon him.

Robinson had never taken kindly to the Dempseys, the family into which his sister had married. Each time they called he wished he might never see them again. He was not a vindictive man, but the Dempseys were a pompous family; and though considered the wealthiest people in the cotton brokerage business, were known as an arrogant set.

When the door had closed on the departure of the Dempseys, Robinson arose from his chair and commenced in a violent manner to open the windows, at the same time calling to his wife to open the doors.

"For heaven's sake, James, what's the matter with you? What's all this about?"

"Matter! Matter!" exclaimed Robinson, "I am almost suffocated. They came here, knowing our straitened circumstances, only to air their wealth; now, I want to ventilate the room, as the air is permeated with the rankest kind of poison a human being can breathe; but never mind, my dear, we'll have as much money as the Dempseys in a short time."

"Yes, James Robinson, the old story. I'm sick at heart at hearing you say it. Here I am with not a decent dress to wear; everybody makes money but you. Why don't you buy cotton like Dempsey?"

After his wife retired, Robinson sat down and began to brood over his increasing pecuniary troubles. In a short time he arose and commenced pacing up and down the room, exclaiming:

"I'll do it! I'll do it! I will not be a drudge any longer. If other people can make money, why can't I?"

He seemed to have lost, for the time being, all of his old-time caution, and made up his mind to plunge in Jack-Pot mining stock, then wait for the market to rise.

Lawyer Robinson held in trust for his numerous clients, a very large amount of securities, which he could hypothecate in case of an emergency.

The following morning he commissioned certain

people to purchase all the Jack-Pot stock there was for sale. Everything was ready and he decided to go the full length of his tether.

Through the continual nagging of his wife, the superciliousness of his relatives, and the many petty meannesses he had to contend with, Robinson had turned from a pillar of conservatism to as bold a speculator as Liverpool had seen in many a year.



CHAPTER II.

MISS RUTH ROBINSON was considered the most bewitching young lady in Oxtou. She had the purest of minds, with a certain grace and fascination of manner of which she was entirely oblivious. The winning simplicity of her smile was a revelation in itself, while the eyes betokened the grand, calm, slumbering power, the mystery of which so many had in vain tried to fathom. Her sweet temper, combined with a certain air of refinement, endeared her to all who knew her; while the firm, friendly grasp of her hand impressed you at once with her warmth of feeling and sincerity. The distinction between Ruth and the generality of pretty girls, was the fact that after you had been introduced to her, instead of the conversation becoming wearisome to both parties, as is so frequently the case, her sincere interest in all you said generally led you to relate some personal anecdote.

She was a very attentive listener; not the insipid person who pretends, and who at the same time is trying to catch the attention of others in the room; but one whose sympathetic nature seemed to grasp the very meaning and depth of each word.

Ruth was not an up-to-date society girl according to the code of the day, for she did not play golf, tennis, nor sail a boat. In walking, however, she excelled, as many of the young ladies of

Oxton remembered only too well when accompanying her on her rambles through the country.

Ruth's male admirers could never understand how it was, not even those who were slightly blasé, and who considered the average young lady insipid, and soon tired of her company; yet they never seemed to tire of Ruth. More than one of the "old boys" wished that he was young again, that he might try to win her.



CHAPTER III.

IT IS Ruth's birthday. She has retired to her room to think over the event of her life—her engagement, which occurred a year ago. She has taken from the drawer of her *escritoire*, a photograph of a young officer wearing the queen's uniform, and holding it in her hand with great reverence, imprints a kiss upon the manly brow. It is not the kiss of a society belle, but one that springs spontaneously from her heart. It is the divine inspiration of pure love, free from all those mean little foibles that are so debasing to a pure mind. The soul-inspiring expression on her face as she gazes on the photograph is such as portrait painters ever strive for, showing as it does the reflection of her heart's yearning for the object of its devotion.

To her at this time, the world and everything in it is a blank. She is alone. Before the shrine of her lover's portrait she pours out her heart and soul. The very atmosphere is permeated with the spiritual presence of her lover. "Her Jack," as she calls him.

Still gazing on the photograph, her countenance begins to change. Who can read her thoughts as the kaleidoscope of her features run the gamut of the emotions of her heart. They began with the faintest *pianissimo*, ending, after coursing through every fiber of her body, in the loudest *fortissimo*. Hers is a love all consuming. Her every thought of her lover is sacred. At last, overcome with emotion, she lies down to rest.

In a short time she arose, and struggling within herself for the mastery of her feelings, was about to replace the photograph in its secret hiding place, when there came a knock on the door.

It was Ruth's mother, who, upon entering the room, began in her blandest tones :

"Ruth, dear, do you know this is your birthday? You are twenty-one to-day."

Presenting her daughter with a ring as a birthday present from herself and husband, Mrs. Robinson continued in a suave manner :

"Ruth, dear, I wish to speak to you concerning your future welfare, which at times gives me great uneasiness."

Ruth knew what was coming and dreaded the conversation.

"Ruth, as this is your twenty-first birthday, don't you think you ought to be making some preparations for settling down in life? Tell me, daughter, why don't you accept young Mr. Rushton?"

Approaching her mother, and embracing her in an affectionate manner, she exclaimed :

"Mother, dear, please don't let us have any words about Mr. Rushton. It is not right in the sight of God to talk of such a marriage. Think, mother, what a crime it would be were I to do such a thing."

Mrs. Robinson was not to be so easily overcome by this mood of Ruth's. She and her husband had talked it over the night before, that if they could persuade their daughter to marry young Rushton, they would be in as good a pecuniary position as any of the families in Oxtan.

"Just to think, after all my planning and scheming to bring about this wedding, she sets us at defiance by refusing to marry him. She must and shall marry him; it's the only escape out of our present difficulties."

Arising from her chair in a violent passion, Mrs. Robinson was about to leave the room when she saw the photograph of her daughter's lover on the escritoire.

With one bound she had it in her hand, and with a voice rendered almost unnatural with anger, exclaimed:

"So this is the cause of your stubbornness! I thought this matter was settled a year ago. Understand, Ruth Robinson, you shall never with my consent marry this man."



CHAPTER IV.

MRS. ROBINSON had made up her mind to rise to the top of the social ladder by marrying Ruth to some rich man. She cared nothing for Ruth's feelings in the matter. This school-girl nonsense about love was all bosh. If the man had the appearance and manners of a gentleman, and plenty of money, what else was needed? Ruth was a fool.

Mrs. Robinson, like the majority of mothers, had forgotten the days of her own girlhood. Days when nothing could appease or take the place of holy love. It had taken twenty-five years to change her into the callous, cynical and mercenary woman which we find her at the present time. Would money instead of love have sufficed for her when she was Ruth's age? No. When her parents had reasoned with her about marrying James Robinson, she had defied them, and given them to understand she would marry him in spite of all the world. She was in love then, and that love had to be satisfied; but at the present time, she ridiculed the idea that any of the finer feelings of humanity existed, and would sacrifice for social position, the youth and love of her daughter without the least compunction.

The selfishness of Mrs. Robinson was apparent. She had realized the joys and ambitions of the heart which come to every true woman when she marries the man she loves. But now, when her daughter wished to follow in her footsteps, Mrs. Robinson ridi-

culed Ruth, and told her that marrying for love was a thing of the past. It is safe to say that if the young soldier was as wealthy as the young brewer, Mrs. Robinson would just dote on him as the most charming of men.

Mrs. Robinson was not the woman to go into hysterics over sudden loss or calamity of any kind. She had been brought up in a different school. Walking up and down the room for some time, she finally faced Ruth, and with a keen, penetrating look, as if she would read her daughter's heart, said :

"Ruth Robinson, am I to understand that you intend marrying that man?" pointing to the photograph on the escritoire.

"Mother, mother, dear! Don't, don't, I beg of you, say another word, as it grieves me to see you so much annoyed, and it cannot possibly do any good."

"Ruth Robinson, I'll have an understanding with you now. It is the wish of your father and myself that you marry Mr. Rushton, and if you don't, you cease to be a daughter of ours. What is the reason that you will not accept him? Is he not your equal socially? Can he not provide you with all that a young lady could desire? Besides, he is rich beyond the possibility of ever becoming poor; also, his turnout is the finest in Oxton, and I am sure there is nothing in his character at which any one can point the finger of reproach. What can this hair-brained soldier do for you? Are you content to live on the meagre stipend that he receives? If you don't accept Mr. Rushton, you will rue it the longest day you live. The building of his London residence was with a view to your marrying him; so your father and I were given to understand."



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Mrs. Robinson paused to give her words time to have their effect, then continued more gently :

"Ruth, dear, after you marry Mr. Rushton, and take your place in society, you will be the reigning belle and the talk of two continents. Who is there in all England that could surpass you in appearance? Nature has been more than kind to you in the bestowal of her charms, both physical and mental; and, with the addition of some of Worth's and Felix's creations, you would stand alone,—yes, without a rival."

Ruth, though silent, did not for a moment waver in her pure and holy love for the man of her choice. She felt inwardly ashamed of her mother, though the world would never know what her thoughts were toward her. She bore her no malice; but the thought that her mother could so far forget herself as to urge a marriage that was against the pure dictates of her heart, tainted as such a union would be with mercenary motives, and unrighteous in the sight of God, weighed heavily on her mind.

While absorbed in these thoughts, her mother sat watching her.

"Ruth, I see you know that I am right, and after you have had time to think the matter over, I know you'll change your mind."

Ruth, during the entire conversation, had been deciding on what course to pursue so as to make her answer as soothing as possible for her mother. Telling an untruth or playing a part was so abhorrent to her, that she could not bear the thought of her mother going away with a wrong impression. She would tell the truth, come what may.

"Mother," she exclaimed, in a voice that was clear

and free from malice, "I cannot bear you to go away with that impression. Stay—and let us decide this matter once for all. Have you forgotten that I have ever considered the welfare of you and father; also my sister and brother, and that to-day I would sacrifice my life for you and them, but when you ask me to give up my lover you ask me something that is beyond my power. Our vows were made before God, and nothing but death can ever separate us. I have pledged myself in the eyes of our Heavenly Father to marry Captain Hardesty, and shall abide by His kind and just Providence.

"I ask you, mother, in what position would I be as the wife of Mr. Rushton, should I so debase myself as to marry him? In my mind, there is only one answer—purchased by gold, like our unfortunate sisters of the streets. I cannot, nor will I, deceive that gentleman by pretending to love him. I would be afraid of the wrath of God were I to do such a thing. What would you have me do? Betray my lover and become a hypocrite and perjurer in the eyes of Him who sees all things?"

Mrs. Robinson was silenced for the time being. She made up her mind to lay the whole matter before her husband. So far they had failed; they must now try another plan. One thing was certain; Ruth must marry Rushton. It was the only way out of their present pecuniary difficulties.

It was now woman against woman. Daughter against mother.

On one side there was honesty, and purity of heart, with a grand, sublime faith in God and in all His teachings; ready to suffer hardships, and go through



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life with the man she loved, be he ever so poor, rather than degrade her sex by selling herself to the highest bidder in the matrimonial market. With Mrs. Robinson, love and its finer feelings were dead. Her heart was as callous as a hibernating snake's.

Ruth little knew, when she in righteous indignation assailed her mother on behalf of herself and lover, that she had thrown down the gauntlet, and challenged her mother to a battle of wits. She had aroused in her mother all the subtlety of age, avarice and vanity.

Mrs. Robinson was not going to give up without a struggle the one great chance of her life to pay back all the genteel and heartless snubs she had received from the residents of Oxtan. She was prepared to throw to the winds all the good and true principles of womanhood, and as the mother of the millionaire's wife, reign, as it were, a dowager duchess. This was worth a struggle. The supreme effort of her life would be to bring it about.

The following night, Mrs. Robinson related to her husband all that had taken place between herself and Ruth. Robinson listened very attentively, then said:

"I'm afraid we've got the task of our lives before us. Even in spite of the most severe coercion that it is possible to bring to bear upon her, I think she'll defeat us."

"Defeat us! James Robinson, do you know what you are saying? I want you to understand that I've made up my mind she shall marry young Rushton. I'm not quietly going to let a school girl outwit me in the face of all this marriage means. She'll marry young Rushton; if we can't make her by fair means, then by foul."

"Don't say that word again, my dear; it sounds criminal, it does, upon my word."

"I suppose you'll be ready to enjoy the plums when they fall, no matter whose hand shakes the tree?"

Robinson remained silent. He was no match for his wife in a scheme of this kind, although in business circles he was considered one of the shrewdest men in Liverpool.

"Well, my dear," he said at last, "I'll leave it all to you, as I am sure you can handle this matter best by yourself. When you have matured your plans, let me know; I would like to hear them."

"Perhaps I shall," was her abrupt reply, and the conference ended in a frigid manner.



CHAPTER V.

ROBINSON'S wife by her constant nagging had goaded her husband to such an extent as to arouse once more an ambition to become rich, which she had many times nipped in the bud by her extravagances. His very being seemed to have changed, and his only peace of mind seemed to be when he was thinking how he would branch out after he made his fortune in the stock market.

His wife had always held the upper hand over him to a certain extent and now he could not refrain from smiling when he thought of the task she had on hand in trying to coerce his daughter into marrying young Rushton. He idolized Ruth, and gloried in her spirit and womanly virtue. He chuckled many times during the day when he thought of the battle royal they would have. His wife had always prided herself on the accomplishment of whatever she undertook, and Robinson, in order to avoid any annoyance, generally allowed her to have her own way. She had in Ruth, however, one who would never get angry, but who, in anything she deemed just and right, would at all times be as firm as a rock. Robinson likened his daughter to the rocks on our sea coast, and his wife to the pitiless tide that lashed itself into fury every six hours in a vain attempt to wash them away; but, when the tide receded, there were the rocks, as firm as ever, ready to do battle with the next oncoming tide.

The night following his orders to the commission men to purchase Jack-Pot stock, Robinson, when the clerks had left the office, went to a small restaurant, and after partaking of a light meal, procured all the American papers that had arrived that day; also letters from two of his New York correspondents; then returned to his office. With his chair tilted back, he puffed rings of smoke from his cigar, and was soon in the seventh heaven of happiness, for all the mining papers had a bull tendency, each of them giving the Jack-Pot mine as a good investment. He was so completely absorbed in the stock market that he did not hear a knock at the door. The person, after waiting a short time, turned the handle of the door and entered the office.

"Hello, Robinson, didn't you hear me knock?"

"No, I didn't, Jenkins, old boy. How are you, anyway?"

"Oh, fair, for an old timer."

"Come, take a seat, and let me have all the news."

"Well, Robinson, I was passing and saw a light in your office, and thought I would drop in and see you about a little business matter. You know, I suppose, that Harry left considerable property, but it's so scattered that it will require the services of a man to look after it. What I wish you to do is to close up the estate and put all the money into some good, safe investment. I don't care so much about a high rate of interest, if it's safe. If I had to do it, the fear of making a bad investment would worry me to death. I told my niece that I thought you would be the best man in Liverpool to settle up her father's estate and invest the money with safety. It's all she's got, Rob-



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inson, and I'd like the girl well taken care of."

"Jenkins," replied Robinson confidently, "you may rely upon me investing the money where it will do your niece the most good, and at the same time be perfectly safe."

After his visitor departed, Robinson paced the office floor. He was thinking of the Jenkins money; also the money and securities of his numerous clients of which he had complete control.

CHAPTER VI.

CAPTAIN HARDESTY, or, as his friends called him, "Jack Hardesty," was a captain in one of the line regiments. His personal appearance was striking, command being imprinted in every line of his strong features. Standing nearly six feet, with broad shoulders, he was the picture of manly strength.

When the Boer War broke out, his regiment was one of the first ordered to the front. As soon as he heard the news he obtained leave of absence for forty-eight hours to run down to Birkenhead to bid farewell to Ruth. He had telegraphed her of his coming, and she and her uncle, who was ever Ruth's friend, were at the depot to meet him. The train was a little late. The excitement at receiving the telegram stating that her lover's regiment was ordered to the front, and now the delay of the train, had its effect, her nervousness being apparent as she and her uncle walked up and down the platform. The few minutes' delay of the train seemed hours. Oh, how she longed to see him again! Then her cheeks would blanch as the thought forced itself upon her that he might be killed in battle.

"It's too horrid even to think of," she exclaimed, time and again. "Oh, that God would stop such dreadful carnage as war!"

While pondering over these gloomy thoughts, the screeching of the whistle of the engine aroused her,



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and looking up she saw the express from London pulling slowly into the station.

While Ruth and her uncle were scanning the carriages in search of the captain, they failed to see a gentleman in a long military cloak coming behind them, until he exclaimed:

"Well! Well! Don't you know me?"

"How did you get behind us?" exclaimed Ruth, after recovering her composure. "I thought I watched every carriage."

The greetings being over, and the cab having arrived, they were driven rapidly to the residence of Ruth's uncle.

CHAPTER VII.

RUTH'S uncle, the Rev. Charles Anderson, was a bachelor on the shady side of forty; and though very fond of ladies' society, seemed more at ease in his library. He was a natural student, and loved most of all to have a few congenial friends gather at the parsonage of an evening to discuss the latest books. It was said of him that he was one of the most learned ministers in England, and before settling down to take charge of St. Mark's church, Oxton, had traveled extensively, publishing several books on his return to England. The sound logic that his works contained, made him famous; the consequence being that there was always one or two of the "Cloth" from various parts of England calling upon him.

The Rev. Anderson had always had a strong liking, which in time deepened into the greatest love, for his niece; and when, as a young girl she had graduated from the local school, he urged her mother to place her in his care to finish her education.

Ruth's mother, knowing the great reputation her brother had gained, was only too glad to take advantage of the opportunity, as she knew that not only would Ruth have a superior education than she could otherwise provide for her, but the fact that her daughter was being educated by the Rev. Charles Anderson was, of itself, something of which to be proud.

Ruth was still a pupil under her uncle's tutelage at the time she attained her twentieth birthday. He then



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told her he had taught her as far as he could go, but it was his desire, subject to her consent, to send her for a year to the highest and most select college for young ladies, to get those little finishing touches in deportment and music. When he received a report from the principal of the academy stating that they were afraid they could not improve Ruth's education, except to have her stay under the Italian professor for music, for which she seemed to have a marked talent, he felt repaid a thousand times over for all the trouble and pains he had taken with her education. This letter was worth more to the Rev. Charles Anderson than the rarest of gems; and at times, in strict confidence, in the presence of one or two of his most intimate friends, he would produce it with childish glee. He was a little vain of Ruth; and when his teaching had been honored by the highest ladies' seminary in England, his cup of happiness was full.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN the cab arrived at the parsonage, the housekeeper had dinner ready.

Captain Hardesty gave them all the news of barrack life, and as the possibilities of the war were discussed, Ruth's face would blanch, and the color come and go at the very thought of the ordeal her lover would have to go through; she could not bring herself to contemplate the possibility of his being killed, but had visions of him lying suffering on the battlefield. If he should be invalided back to England, she would go to the hospital and nurse him. Such were her thoughts during the dinner.

By the time dinner was over, the conversation had become more settled. Ruth having left the room, the Captain said:

"Coming down in the train, Doctor" (most of the Rev. Anderson's friends called him Doctor), "I was thinking what would become of Ruth should I get bowled over in Africa. I'm not egotistical, but I'm afraid it would almost kill her."

"I know, my dear boy," replied the Doctor, "but there is one thing, Jack, that you can make your mind easy about, and that is, while I live, Ruth will be well taken care of. If the Lord should call me away, then all I have of this world's goods will become hers."

Rising and going over to the Doctor's chair with outstretched hands, the Captain exclaimed:



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"Doctor, how can I ever thank you for all this kindness to me? You have taken a burden off my heart that has caused me great anxiety; and my wish is that God will spare me to come back in good health, so we may, in our humble way, make your days in this world as happy as it is possible for us to do."

The Captain, burning with gratitude, would have continued, when the Doctor, upon some pretext, escaped from the room. When he returned, Ruth and the Captain were talking in a very serious manner.

The Doctor, always thinking of other people's happiness, and seeing how serious the lovers appeared, said:

"As this is our last chance to be together for some time, why not go to the theatre to-night?"

Ruth looked with gleaming eyes on the Captain, as he, reading their expression, replied:

"Doctor, if Ruth will say the word."

They had scarcely been seated in the theatre when the Doctor was recognized by some friends in an adjoining box, who immediately sent word to ask if he would join them. He was glad these friends were present, as he wished the lovers to be alone, and as he arose, apologized in a jesting manner for deserting them.

When alone the Captain in a sympathetic manner asked Ruth if her mother had made any more protests against him.

Ruth, with head slightly bent, remained silent for a moment; then slowly raising her head until her eyes met those of her lover, she answered with firmness, every word coming from the innermost depths of her heart:

"Jack, please don't ask me what any one may have said about you; I care not for the opinion of others; you are mine, Jack, in the sight of God; and before all the world I will keep my vow to you."

While Ruth was speaking, the Captain gazed on her with rapture, the highest ambition of his heart being realized. As he still continued gazing on her, the reflection of his joyful heart shone in his countenance. Holding her hand with a gentle pressure, he replied with great fervor:

"God bless you, Ruth, for this. I now go forth to fight my country's battles, knowing that I have the best and truest woman in the world waiting my return; and I hope, Ruth, dear, that God will so shape my life as to make me worthy of such love as yours."

Coming home from the play, the Doctor and the Captain discussed the question whether the "Immortal William" intended Hamlet to assume insanity, or whether he was actually insane through brooding over the death of his father.

They had enjoyed the play; and the Doctor was about to make more comments, when the cab drew up at Ruth's residence. Quickly alighting, the Captain escorted her to the door, the Doctor admonishing her to be around in good time in the morning.



CHAPTER IX.

NEXT morning the Doctor and the Captain were anxiously waiting for Ruth to arrive.

The Doctor, communing with his thoughts, murmured :

"I know very well that her mother is taking her to task about Jack ; and as soon as he departs, I shall come in for my share of it."

"Have you any idea what could have detained her, Doctor?"

"Don't worry, Jack, my boy, she'll be here soon. Your train does not go until one o'clock, and I'm sure she'll be here in a few minutes."

Never was a bell answered so quickly. As the maid ran upstairs to answer it, the Doctor and the Captain emerged from the sitting room and raced to see who should be the first to open the door.

It was Ruth. As she entered the vestibule, the Doctor and the Captain, one on each side, took hold of her arm and almost carried her into the sitting room.

"Do you know, Ruth, that I have had hard work to keep Jack from going over to your house to see what had detained you?"

Ruth was a perfect picture as she sat down to the breakfast table, and as soon as breakfast was over the Doctor with a good-natured laugh, said :

"Do you think, Captain, that Ruth and you would be very lonesome if I should leave you for the next

two hours? The fact is, I have to make a few calls, and as your train, Jack, does not leave until one o'clock, I'll be back in time for us to have a little lunch before we start for the station."

"Well, Doctor," said Jack, "I don't know whether I can entertain Ruth or not for such a length of time; but I'll try, and that will show a willingness on my part."

At this sally of the Captain's, Ruth blushing laughed.

After the Doctor departed, the first word the Captain said, was:

"Ruth, do you think there was ever so good a man as the Doctor?"

"Jack, you will have to ask some one else, for I have never met one so unselfish and kind in all my life; and when I think of all that he has done for me, I pray that I may be spared to make his declining years one broad ray of sunshine, studying his every want, as he at all times has mine."

While Ruth was talking of the Doctor, the Captain sat like one in a dream, and when she ceased still continued gazing on her. As he did not change his position, Ruth at last said:

"Jack, what are you thinking about?"

Still gazing on her chaste and lovely form, he answered with marked tenderness:

"Ruth, I am thinking of you; I am thinking of what you will have to go through when I am gone, and I pray to God that He will give you strength to bear, without anger, your mother's dislike for me."

"Jack, dear," she continued, in endearing tones, "I beg of you not to give it a thought, as I don't want

you, Jack, to go away thinking that I am being persecuted."

"This is just like you, Ruth, always so hopeful, but I know you will have a hard time with your mother when I am gone."

The lovers sat facing each other with a sweet idolatry that was perfectly enslaving. Never were two nobler beings so enraptured with each other. With them it was true love, in which wealth or worldly advantage played no part. Both had turned aside from alliances with wealthy families, and were determined to go through life together living for love in its purity.

The Captain, rising slowly, paced up and down the room; then paused, and going behind Ruth's chair, began to smooth her hair, saying as he did so:

"Ruth, dear, do you know your hair is getting darker?"

"I think it is, Jack, a little," she replied.

While still fondling and smoothing his darling's brown tresses, he saw a pair of the Doctor's scissors lying on the table. Picking them up, as he fondly continued stroking her hair, he paused a moment, then filched a lovelock which he placed in the back case of his watch. He then felt that he had something that belonged to her, a part of his beloved Ruth. His face was radiant with joy at having something that in his darkest hours he could look at, knowing it was from her dear head. Yes, his Ruth's hair, he would hold it sacred, and look on it at all times as his talisman.

As her betrothed placed his hands on her head, a thrill of hallowed love coursed through her veins. Hers was a love so pure and holy, so free from the faintest tinge of passion, that it ennobled her, adding a charm

and dignity delightful to behold.

"Jack, dear, why do you wear your hair so short?" said Ruth, as she purloined a lock from a place where she thought it would not be noticed; the Captain at the time pretending to read. They were enjoying the only bliss in the world—true love.

"A volume in a word,
An ocean in a tear."

We will pass over their conversation, and take it for granted that it was the old, old story.

Ruth was still busy smoothing the Captain's hair, and trying to make it look presentable, when the Doctor let himself in with his latch-key.

As he entered, they both arose to meet him.

The Doctor advanced with great gusto, and placing an arm around each of them, said:

"Will you ever forgive me for keeping you waiting so long? How lonely you must have been during my absence. I am afraid, Captain, you thought I had forgotten you, and you, Ruth, dear, what will you ever think of your uncle for being so cruel?"

When the Doctor ceased speaking the Captain roared with laughter. He knew that the Doctor was having one of his little jokes; also that the Doctor's visits were a veiled pretext for giving Ruth and himself a little time to themselves; and his heart went out to him for his tact and unselfishness.

Just as the maid announced lunch, the Doctor noticed where Ruth had cut the Captain's hair.

"Good gracious, Jack!" he exclaimed, as he laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks, "Whoever cut your hair?"



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Ruth and the Captain blushed, and looking at each other, joined the Doctor in a round of laughter.

"Jack, your chums will,—well, they will plague the life out of you to find out who was the barber."

"I suppose so, Doctor," said the Captain, smiling in an embarrassed manner and blushing violently as he sauntered into the dining room.

CHAPTER X.

LUNCH being over, and the cab having arrived, the Doctor, Ruth and the Captain were driven to the Birkenhead station.

When they entered the building, the Doctor excused himself upon the pretext of buying some papers for the Captain to read on his journey to London.

Ruth, as she stood there talking earnestly to the Captain, pale and trembling, with the thought that perhaps she might never see him again, was rudely awakened to the inevitable parting by the guard calling "All aboard!"

The Doctor, who was keeping his weather eye open over the top of a newspaper which he was pretending to read, rushed up to the Captain, and placing the morning papers, also a small package in his hands, said :

"Good-bye, Jack, God preserve you. Write as often as you can," and with a fervent handshake, stepped aside, not wishing to witness the parting between the lovers.

The Captain clasped Ruth in his arms, and with a reverence worthy of his deep and holy love, imprinted a kiss on her brow.

The look that she gave him was like that of some wounded dumb animal, so plaintive was it in its appeal, as she stood there, utterly crushed and powerless, every fibre of her body undergoing the greatest tension. Big tears were rolling down her cheeks, but not a word



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did she utter. Her grief was too intense for words, as with hands firmly placed on her lover's shoulders, her face upturned to his in a supplicating attitude, entirely oblivious to her surroundings, she kissed him, as between her sobs her heart spoke the words :

"God bless you, Jack, good-bye."

Placing a small white parcel in the Captain's hands, she made an effort to walk away—staggered—and would have fallen if the Doctor had not come briskly and taken her arm. Leading her to a cab he told the driver to hurry to the parsonage.

CHAPTER XI.

AS THE Captain sat in the railway carriage in a bewildered reverie, a thousand thoughts came and went with lightning rapidity. Rousing himself, he found he was still holding the little parcel that Ruth had placed in his hands at the parting. It was tied with the daintiest of pale blue ribbon, the inscription bearing the words "For Jack."

Opening the little package, the first thing that met his eyes was a picture of his idol, seated on a camp stool beside her uncle, who appeared to be reading a book.

When the Captain's eyes rested on the image of his beloved, they moistened as a flood of tender memories came back to him; then, as his strength of character reasserted itself, he placed the photograph in his breast-pocket with a silent vow, that, go where he would, or whatever might occur, the image of his own Ruth would always rest near his heart.



CHAPTER XII.

THE Jack-Pot gold mine had been shut down five years previous to the beginning of this story. The reason for the shutting down of the mine was on account of it flooding, a charge of dynamite having tapped a subterranean stream of such size and velocity that the men had been forced to flee for their lives.

At that time at a meeting of the stockholders, it was decided not to attempt to pump out the mine on account of the enormous expense it would incur. This, with the fact that the ore had given out previous to the flooding, was the cause of its abandonment for the time being.

The stock, before the flood, and before it was known that the ore had given out, was above par, but the firm of Reed & Co., who had recently obtained possession, acquired their controlling interest since the flooding, and while the stock was a drug on the market, enabling them to obtain it at their own price.

x The firm of Reed & Co., proper, consisted of four men who had been at the bottom of various schemes, and were utterly devoid of conscience in regard to making money.

Any person going through the St. James Building, at Twenty-sixth Street and Broadway, New York, might have seen on the glass panels of one of the office doors on the second floor, the words in gilt letters, "Reed & Co., Mining Stocks." This was the headquarters of the firm.

Whenever the firm of Reed & Co. saw a chance to make a little money through this office, unless it was strictly legitimate, they would not undertake it, and as they were always prompt with the payment of their bills, they naturally had a good business reputation. This office was only a blind against the inquisitiveness of their friends and fellow clubmen.

When they had any scheme on hand that necessitated their having an office to operate the same, they always took one in the name of one of their "tools," they themselves at all times remaining in the background; and such office would never under any circumstances be mentioned as having anything to do with the firm of Reed & Co.

To all, therefore, with the exception of a certain man in certain headquarters in the city, they were known as the rich mining brokers. Their mode of procedure, combined with natural shrewdness and strict attention to any business they had on hand, had enabled them so far to escape any criminal prosecution; although there was still hanging over the head of the firm an indictment in the name of one of the many aliases he had assumed at different times. With all their chicanery, however, they stood well with a certain class of money lenders who were willing to take a risk, since they were allowed to make their own terms, and the firm of Reed & Co. had never as yet met with any difficulty in borrowing money enough to put through their schemes.

The apparently honest business life the members of the firm of Reed & Co. had been leading for the past twelve months was beginning to pall on them. They were getting tired of posing; besides, there was

no money in it. During the past year, all sorts of schemes had been proposed, but when the chief, as the head of the firm was called, saw them from his viewpoint, they were turned down. They would not undertake any small venture; this reputation they had built up was not to be sacrificed in any haphazard scheme; it must be for a large amount and nothing was too great for them to undertake. There was one thing in common with this firm. They all believed that in business circles every man had his price.

It was at this time that Dick Harvey, a mining engineer, turned up in New York.

This man Harvey had spent the last year in Colorado, most of the time, in and around Denver. It was here that he obtained all the inside facts concerning the Jack-Pot mine, situated at Black Hawk, about thirty-five miles from Denver. Having procured all the details about the mine, and knowing the great value of the ore that had at times been taken out of it, he conceived the idea, in conjunction with the firm of Reed & Co., of getting possession and working a stupendous swindle upon the unsuspecting public—providing the bait was put before them in the right manner.

It was not the first time that Dick Harvey had done business with the firm of Reed & Co., they having used him in connection with several deals they had put through. Men like Harvey were the jackals for such firms.

While Harvey possessed the shrewdness to procure the information, and fathom out the minor points that were needed to work out the scheme, he, like others of his class, lacked the polish and power of

concentration to go to the front and appear before the public. Nor did the firm of Reed & Co. ever appear publicly in any of the schemes where they knew there would be an aftermath; that was not a part of their plans; they had other tools for that; men who would take the hint and get out of the country when it got too warm for them; they were used as chess by the firm of Reed & Co.

Harvey laid his plans before the firm, and was told to call again in a day or two; in the meantime, they would look over the papers.

A few days afterwards Harvey made his appearance and was ushered into the private office of the firm. After a meeting, which lasted until noon, the firm decided to go into the scheme.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE evening following the meeting with Harvey, the members of the firm of Reed & Co., after dining at Shanley's, were driven to Daly's Theatre. After the play they went to the rooms of Royal, one of the firm, to talk over the plans for manipulating the stock of the Jack-Pot mine.

Perhaps it would be as well to diverge a little and give a description of the members of the present firm.

The firm of Reed & Co. had been in existence for a long time, but at the time of Reed's death he was the only member. When he died the present firm bought the fixtures and good will from his widow, with her consent to retain the firm's name.

The firm at the present time, independent of the name of Reed & Co., consisted of four members, who were known to their cronies as Bob Ryalls (alias Royal), Harry Renshaw, Jack Bowers and Billy Brady. Royal was the leader of this quartette, and no scheme or plot was ever hatched unless Royal, or, as his partners sometimes called him, "The Chief," had given his consent.

The bachelor apartments of this man, Royal, were fitted with an eye to solid comfort; nor was the esthetic design neglected. It was very evident to a stranger visiting his rooms that the occupant had excellent taste.

When the members of the firm were seated, Royal,

having once more glanced over the papers left by Harvey, said:

"From what I have learned, this stock can be bought for ten cents on the dollar. We'll have to buy enough to get a controlling interest, then increase the capital stock to two millions; this would leave close on a million to divide among us. Of course, if we can create the right kind of a boom, there is no telling just how much we can make before the bubble is pricked; but at the mildest estimate, we ought to make what I have stated, and from past deals you know I am rather conservative in figuring on profits. We will have to feel our way carefully, as it is simply impossible to make plans that will work out to the letter. Speaking in a general way, one of the worst features we have to contend with is to keep outsiders from gaining access to the works; they will have to be well fenced in, and no one allowed to enter without a pass, and passes must never be given. Then again, I think it advisable to unload all the stock, or as much as we can, in Europe. Another thing of importance that will help us, Harvey states, is that the Lone Star Mining Co. have no further use for their immense pumps, and if we could hire or buy them cheap, that in itself would be a big item and make a good showing. Brady will have to go to Denver, and go over the ground with Harvey. There must be extra caution used in this deal; and I want to warn you, Renshaw, not to breathe a word of this to any of those fly-by-night friends of yours. I don't want to rake open any old sores, but you know the Electric pretty near got us into trouble through one of your lady friends."

Renshaw was about to explain matters, when Royal silenced him by saying:

"It's all right, Renny, I understand how it happened; the old story, women and wine—when the wine is in the wit is out, and a man is inclined to be garrulous and prone to tell those dear little cherubs they'll soon be riding in their coupe."

"Brady," continued Royal, "when can you start?"

"I'm ready any time you say the word."

"Then you had better start to-morrow; take Harvey with you and get the details concerning everything about the mine. Write us fully, and don't come back until I send you word."

When the firm of Reed & Co. had procured all the stock required, and made a contract for the use of the pumps, the swindle began to assume somewhat the form of a business enterprise.

The next move they made was to place a certain Mr. Smooth in charge of an office near Wall street, on the door of which were the words, "Office of The Jack-Pot Mining Co."

Smooth and his partner, Blackman, had strict orders never to appear at the office of Reed & Co., and whenever there was anything to be discussed, the conference always took place at the office of a mutual friend, where there was a private room kept for the use of the firm of Reed & Co.

Having got the New York office in shape, another man was dispatched to Denver to assist Harvey.

The following week word came from Harvey that he had all of the pumps working; and every hour the gauge showed a decrease in the water in the mine. This was a cause for great joy with the firm of Reed

& Co., as it is not infrequently the case with mines that become flooded, that as fast as you pump the water out it fills again from some subterranean source.

Harvey had already made the place presentable, having repaired all that weather and time had destroyed, putting new locks on the doors, and barring every entrance from the outside except through the office.

After the pumps had been at work a month they were enabled to reach the first level, when some of the best miners in Denver were put to work.

Royal had no difficulty in getting money from the people who were backing him in this gigantic swindle, they having perfect confidence in him. He had paid them handsomely in other deals, and they now stood ready to cash all drafts drawn on them.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE Jack-Pot mine had always been considered one of the best equipped in the State of Colorado. The construction of the stamp mills and the delivery of the ore from the mouth of the mine to the same were perfect in every detail.

In Harvey, the firm of Reed & Co. had one of the shrewdest experts in all branches of the mining industry.

About this time the New York office of the Jack-Pot Mining Co. received a package, by Wells-Fargo express, of several bars of bullion, with the stamp of the Jack-Pot mine on them; this, in conjunction with the glowing reports of the Denver Mining News, caused the stock to be much talked about. Parties inquiring at the office of the Jack-Pot mine about the shares were given to understand that there were none for sale. This order had been given by Royal. He did not want any nibbling at the stock to run the chances of the swindle being nipped in the bud; he would wait until the fever had begun in earnest; then, when the public clamored for it, he would unload in as short a time as possible.

By this time several of the New York papers that printed mining news had written to their correspondents in Denver to procure what information they could concerning the mine. Harvey, who anticipated the call of these newspaper men, was waiting patiently, to use his own words, to "fill them chock full of hot air."

After waiting a day or two, a gentleman called, stating he was representing one of the mining papers. Harvey was about to answer the man when the office boy brought in the cards of two other reporters. Telling the boy to show them in, he shook hands with them—then paused, gradually breaking into an apparent smile, as he said:

"Now, gentlemen, as you are all birds of a feather, I might as well address you collectively, and say that I think I ought not to allow any one down in the mine at present.

"You gentlemen, of all others," continued Harvey, "know the enormous expense in getting a mine like this into shape, and now that the risk is passed, we don't wish outsiders to gobble up the stock before we have time to corral it. However, if you'll give me your word not to publish too glowing an account of what you see, you may go down."

One of the reporters, representing an Eastern mining paper, with the bump of self-conscious superiority very much enlarged, had the special attention of Harvey. From reports that Harvey had taken good care to procure about the respective merits of the mining knowledge these men had, he found out that while they were reporters for mining papers, they possessed little or no technical knowledge of ore, and could not tell the difference between good paying ore, iron crystals and copper pyrites; otherwise they would never have been allowed inside the mine.

The reporters, having donned their canvas suits, kept specially at the mine for visitors, proceeded down the shaft in company with Harvey. Getting off at the first level, he sent one of the men for "Old Ben,"

the foreman. In a few minutes that worthy appeared.

After introducing the reporters, Harvey said:

"Ben, I want you to show these gentlemen through the mine. Let them see all there is,—don't keep anything back. I believe they are all right, and they'll not divulge any of the mine's secrets."

"All right, sir; I'll see that your orders are obeyed."

Ben and the reporters proceeded along the first level; then taking a turn, entered one of the cross cuts.

The sight which met the gaze of the reporters as they entered this cross cut was such that they were completely dazzled; it seemed to be ablaze; the wire gold, with the iron crystals and copper pyrites, creating the greatest impression on them.

"There is a sight for your life," said Ben. "I tell you, gentlemen, that I've been mining for thirty years, and never saw such a rich vein in my life."

Coming out of the cross cut, they passed on to other sections, the reporters being greatly impressed. The fact was, however, there was not enough gold in sight to pay the running expenses of the mine; and what the reporters saw were merely the iron crystals and copper pyrites, with a thin ledge of wire gold running through the vein. Harvey and Ben were not deceived in the calibre of these reporters, and were satisfied that they could not tell a good ledge of paying ore from one that would not pay for the mining. Royal had always held that the best way to boom stocks was to take some garrulous persons into your confidence; swear them to secrecy as to what you have; then they will never rest until they have tried to make money for themselves and their friends by abusing your confidence. He felt sure that the day following the arrival of

their mail at their respective offices, their papers would contain glowing accounts of the mine.

After the reporters came out of the mine, Harvey met them in the office.

"Well, gentlemen, what do you think of it?"

The reporter of the Denver Mining News, replying, said:

"All that I can say, Mr. Harvey, is that you have a bonanza"; the others voicing his opinion.

As the reporters were leaving the office, Harvey beckoned to Mr. Knowall, the garrulous gentleman. Taking him to one side, and talking in a confidential manner, he said:

"Come around by yourself some time; I've got something that will surprise you."

"I'll be around to-morrow."

"All right, any time," replied Harvey.

Next day, Mr. Knowall having arrived, he and Harvey proceeded down to the third level.

"Where's Ben?" said Harvey to one of the men. "Tell him I want him at once."

"Ben, have you finished the cribbing in the new cross cut?" inquired Harvey.

"Yes, sir."

"Are you sure it is, so that Mr. Knowall and I can enter with safety?"

"Yes, sir; the gang foreman has just made his report, but if you'll wait a few minutes, I'll take another look and see for myself that everything is safe."

"Do so, Ben," replied Harvey.

While Ben was away looking over the new drift, Mr. Knowall said:

"I thought you were holding something back yes-

terday, Mr. Harvey, and did not blame you, as it is only right that you should get all the stock before the public get onto the bonanza."

"I don't want all of the stock, neither does the company, but we want more than we have at present; and I think it is nothing but right that after all the money this mine has cost us, we should protect ourselves."

Ben having returned and reported everything as safe, they proceeded towards the new drift, where the lights flickered and danced on the walls, creating the impression that it was lined with gold. The magnitude of the seams of apparent gold had such an effect on Mr. Knowall, the reporter, that for once he was speechless, and stood gazing at the bright mass without uttering a word. After getting over his surprise, his presumption reasserted itself, and with a view of impressing the manager and Ben with his knowledge of mining, said:

"I'll tell you, gentlemen, I know a gold mine when I see one, and this mine of yours is the richest and best of any in the country; and I also advise you not to place too much confidence in reporters, as they are not all to be trusted; but depend upon it, I'll never breathe a word of what I've seen."

"Well, Mr. Knowall, I've trusted you, and I hope you won't abuse my confidence."

Harvey used all the subtlety of his nature to get the confidence of this man; he flattered him, telling him that on the occasion of his first visit to the mine he saw that he had to deal with an expert.

CHAPTER XV.

ENTERING the bar room of the hotel on his return from the mine, Mr. Knowall, the reporter, seated himself and ordered whisky.

"What did Harvey take him for?" he mused. "Did he think he was a fool? Why, this was a chance of a lifetime. He was going to get some of that stock, and put his friends onto the good thing."

He laughed as he thought how he had played 'possum and outwitted Harvey; in this world it was everyone for himself. This information would make him rich; and the prestige from the owners of the mining paper, which this scoop would give him, was something of which he was inwardly proud. Taking another drink of whisky, he sauntered majestically towards the hotel office, and calling for writing material, proceeded to his room.

Laying the paper on the table, he lit a cigar, and striking a tragic attitude, strutted up and down the room—suddenly stopping, he took the cigar out of his mouth and began to soliloquize on the brilliant prospects he had of becoming rich.

"To think that yesterday I was but a poor devil of a newspaper correspondent, and to-day, through my own brains, I have that in my possession which will be the means of making me rich for life."

After ordering several more drinks of the seductive beverage, Mr. Knowall sat down and commenced to write to the New York Mining Gazette. With the



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combined aid of whisky, arrogance, and a vivid imagination, he wrote page after page to his employers. When his power of imagination waned, he would order more whisky, and as the power of the spirits rose in the ascendancy, so likewise did his flights of imagination. The editor got orders to go ahead and buy Jack-Pot stock for all he was worth, as he (Knowall), knew a mine when he saw one, and there never was, and never would be, another chance like this to become rich. He gave the editor to understand that all of Monte Cristo's wealth would be as nothing in comparison with this mine.

Going downstairs with the correspondence in a bulky envelope, and patting it affectionately, he mused:

"Scoop—Knowall's made a scoop—that's what they would say at the office when it arrived. But—this was more than a scoop. Was he not sending news whereby he and the proprietor would be made independently rich for life?"

Having mailed the letter, he swaggered into the bar room, and, after treating all present, continued imbibing so freely that in a short time some of the attachés of the hotel had to be called to assist him to his room. Giving the men a small tip, he told them that in a few days he would give them something handsome. With visions of untold wealth as he lay on his bed partly undressed, he finally fell asleep.

By the same mail that carried Mr. Knowall's letter to the editor of the New York Mining Gazette, went one to Royal from Harvey, which stated that he could not tell for sure what the other two reporters thought of the mine, but he could bank on having played a smooth game on the redoubtable Mr. Knowall.

Royal waited anxiously for the next issue of the New York Mining Gazette. Purchasing the paper the following Saturday, he was struck with amazement at what he saw. It was a paragraph in reference to the Jack-Pot mine, with headlines in large type as follows:

From our special correspondent in Denver:

WONDERFUL STRIKE OF ORE IN THE
JACK-POT GOLD MINE.

Gentlemen:

According to instructions received from you to obtain a true report of the Jack-Pot mine, I did, after considerable diplomacy, succeed in winning over the manager, and was granted the special privilege of going down the mine and seeing for myself the condition of affairs. What I saw there only comes to the vision of a man once in a lifetime. I passed through various drifts and cross cuts, and finally came to a room which was fairly alive with almost pure gold. This ore assays from five hundred to a thousand dollars per ton, and in this one room alone there is from thirty to forty millions in sight; and as they are extending the room, with the aid of the wonderful square sets of timber cribbing, it will no doubt run up into a hundred million dollars before the vein gives out.

Old Ben, one of the underground foremen, a man who has been a miner for the past thirty years, said to your correspondent, "that it is the richest mine he ever was in; not excepting the 'Comstock'."

P. S.—The water in the lower levels is being rapidly pumped out, and the mine will be dry in about a month.

Yours very respectfully,

F. J. KNOWALL.

This letter had been culled and rewritten from the luminous one sent by the reporter, Mr. Knowall.

Royal, after reading this, walked up and down the room. It was evident that a volcano was at work within him. He held the cigar between his teeth as a bull terrier its antagonist; then again he would blow out volumes of smoke as if his life depended upon filling the room with the same. Taking hold of the paper, and once more reading the paragraph, he mused:

"Harvey's all right. He knows his business. Everything is running smoothly. It looks like a winner. We must have another meeting to-night; it's getting time to unload."

The boom the Mining Gazette gave to the mine, along with the bullion displayed in a certain jeweler's in Wall street, happened while the market was undergoing a bull movement, and the stock, which was listed, took an upward flight along with the rest of other securities.

As soon as the market opened for business on Monday, there was a feverish desire on the part of the speculators and public in general to purchase Jack-Pot shares, causing a sharp advance. Royal, during the late hours of Saturday and Sunday nights, had given orders for Jack-Pot shares to the brokers he met at the club, besides mailing small orders to numerous others.

One of the club members, a man by the name of Babbles, who had more money than brains, thinking to make a little money out of Royal, said:

"I'll let you have what stock you want, Royal."

"All right, Babbles," answered Royal. "Let me have a hundred shares."

He knew that Babbles could not very well procure the stock for the price he had sold it, and he impressed on him that he wanted the stock bought outright for a customer who was buying for investment.

This was a good stroke of Royal's, as Babbles was rich, and one of the most talkative of the club members, and would likely tell all with whom he came in contact that he was in the market for Jack-Pot stock.

Royal did not intend to fleece any of the club members through the influence of his henchmen by having them buy Jack-Pot stock. What he wished was a large number of genuine orders for the opening of the market the following day.



CHAPTER XVI.

THE man representing the firm of Reed & Co. in England was an American, named Shady, a lawyer by profession. Shady
Law.

Lawyer Shady, after looking over all the legal lights in Liverpool, with a view of getting a shrewd man to go to the front as agent and legal adviser for the Jack-Pot Mining Company, had chosen one by the name of Smythe. It was he who first introduced the subject of the Jack-Pot mine to Robinson. When he advised Robinson to buy the stock, he did not know, nor did he care, whether it was a good investment or not, providing he obtained his commission.

It was at this time that the cablegram reached Liverpool with orders to Smythe, the agent of the Jack-Pot Mining Company, not to sell any more of the stock, as they had struck rich ore and were going to hold all of the stock they could. This cablegram, along with others of like nature, had been sent to all the principal cities of Europe where there were agents of the Jack-Pot Mining Company. Following the cablegram were the mining papers, and upon their arrival in London, Liverpool and Paris, the shares of the Jack-Pot mine took a decided upward tendency.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE firm of Dempsey & Co. was to all intents and purposes that of cotton brokers, although at times the head of the concern dabbled a little in stocks. Dempsey, or as he was nicknamed by his associates, "Old Flint," because of his grasping nature, and his tendency to drive close bargains, was always trying to get the better of his fellow man; and was totally indifferent as to what people said about him; in fact, he seemed to take delight in having them say that Dempsey got the best of some other business man, no matter how questionable the transaction might be. His motto was, "Do others, or they'll do you." However, whenever he got the worst of a deal, it was almost impossible to tolerate him. He carried his defeat into every place he went; his clerks knew at a glance, and on such occasions, when he reached home, he turned the place, figuratively speaking, upside down. There was nothing that suited him; he discharged servants; found fault with the cooking; insulted his friends (that is, those that found it to their benefit to call themselves such), and was, taken altogether, one of those disagreeable persons one is never very anxious to meet. On the other hand, whenever he got the better of some unfortunate individual, his bombastic talk and loud guffaws were equally annoying to a sensitive mind.

In his employ, Dempsey had a footman by the name of Joseph Smiley, more commonly called "Joe." This



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man Joe was the first to know how the "weather stood," as he called the temper, or humor, of the great Dempsey.

Each day at four-thirty the Dempsey carriage was at the Woodside Ferry awaiting the arrival of the boat, to convey the "Big Gun," as Joe called his employer, home. The carriage of the Dempseys was as well known on "Change" as the city clock among the brokers. It was of the most expensive kind, emblazoned with the Dempsey coat of arms, for which "Burke" had received a good round sum for procuring, and drawn by the best matched pair of grays to be found in all England. The clanking chains of silver plate attached to the pole of the carriage, the gold plated harness, in conjunction with the inevitable carriage dogs, without which no English turnout is supposed to be complete, made the most ostentatious display of any turnout in Oxtou.

When Dempsey was in an extra bad humor, the facetious footman, as soon as he arrived at the Dempsey mansion, went directly to the stable and hung a small black flag that he kept for the occasion, on the door. This was to announce to those around that the "Big Gun," as Joe expressed it, "was off his oats," and that anybody wanting any favors had better keep away from him.

On the evening following the morning Robinson had given orders to his agents to buy all the Jack-Pot stock they could, as soon as the Dempsey carriage arrived at the house, and Dempsey had entered, the redoubtable Joe hung out his black flag.

"Well, my Lady Jane," exclaimed the kitchen maid, who had been having a war of words with the cook,

"I'll not have to stand much more of your jawings."

"What's that you say?" replied the cook.

"Do you see that black flag hanging on the stable door?"

"Yes; what about it?"

"Well, you might as well go and pack your trunk."

"See here, you little hussy," said the enraged cook, and catching hold of her, shook her violently as she demanded to know what she meant.

Freeing herself, the maid exclaimed:

"What I mean is, that every time that black flag is hung up, the cook gets her walking papers, and I ain't a bit sorry it's up. No, I'm glad, and if you come near me, I'll throw this dish water on you."

While the maid was holding the dishpan in a threatening attitude, Joe made his appearance to see if the dinner was ready. The maid, seeing him, commenced to cry and sob violently. She was a great admirer of Joe's, and in the language of the kitchen, had been "setting her cap for him." Wishing his sympathy, and at all times trying to "cut out" the waitress, she challenged the cook to come one step nearer.

The cook, seeing Joe, and believing he had been the means of no small gossip of which she had been the subject, made for him at once.

"What's that black flag for?" said she, as she caught that worthy by the hair of the head, tugging, clawing and pounding him with such force as to make him howl with pain.

The kitchen maid could not bear to see Joe, the apple of her eye, in such dire distress, and calling to him to thrash the cook, she threw the contents of the dishpan at its intended victim; but true to the aim of the gentle

sex, Joe received its contents full in the face.

Blinded and scalded by the dishwater, combined with the fierce attack of the cook, he gave a blood-curdling yell as he fell to the floor, dragging the cook down with him.

The kitchen maid was on her knees in an instant, crying, "Joe, Joe, I didn't mean it for you."

All this time the waitress had been ringing for the cook to send up the dinner on the dumb waiter, and as Dempsey had called to know why the devil she did not serve it, she ran downstairs to find out the cause of the delay.

As she entered the kitchen, her eye caught a sight that at once filled her with dismay and alarm, at seeing her darling Joe prostrate, and the two women fighting across the body of the fallen hero. With a scream she charged into the cook and kitchen maid, trying her best to extricate Joe from his apparent danger. Dempsey, after calling to the waitress and receiving no answer, arose in a great passion. Going to the butler's pantry and hearing the commotion in the kitchen, he bellowed in a loud, commanding tone of voice:

"Bring on the dinner; I'll discharge every d—n one of you to-night."

Getting no response, he ran down into the kitchen. Arriving there, he could see nothing but a conglomeration of the arms and legs of the combatants.

"What's this? What's this? Get out of this house, all of you."

Seeing Joe, he rushed at him, exclaiming, "You d——d scoundrel, this is your doing," and attempted with the aid of his foot to hasten his exit. The wily Joe, however, was too quick in dodging him, and es-

caped, leaving a trail of dishwater dripping from him as he ran.

The cook by this time was fairly aroused, and thinking the other servants had heard Dempsey say he was going to discharge her, commenced to arraign him with choice billingsgate.

"So you'll discharge me, will yer?" and raising the potato masher she made a fierce attack on him.

Dempsey did not wait to give battle to the cook, but beat an inglorious retreat.

That evening, as soon as Dempsey had dined, he went the rounds of the grounds looking for Joe. It was evident, however, that the redoubtable Joe was in hiding, waiting for the storm to blow over before venturing into the presence of the pompous Dempsey.

Entering the house, Dempsey sent word by one of the maids to tell Mrs. Dempsey to come into the library, as he wished to speak to her.

Mrs. Dempsey, knowing all that had occurred in the kitchen, and what a bad humor her husband was in when he arrived from his office, was greatly alarmed and nervous on entering the room.

"Did you send for me, dear?"

"Dear—dear, did you say? Yes, you've been dear to me all my life. You and that damned family of yours to-day have been 'dear' to me to the tune of four thousand pounds. Did you hear what I said? That precious brother of yours has robbed me to-day of that amount."

Catching his breath and shrieking with rage, his countenance assumed the expression of the most intense hatred against his wife's brother, as he yelled in a demoniacal manner, "Robbed! Robbed! Robbed!"



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Mrs. Dempsey was completely crushed, and sinking into a chair, sobbed in a heartbroken manner.

The Dempsey mansion was never known to be so gloomy. The people moved about like so many mutes. The bird, as if imbued with human intelligence, had ceased singing in its cage. The poodle dog was in hiding under the lounge, and everything around the house had a funereal aspect.

The cause of Dempsey's great anger toward his brother-in-law was the fact that he had been carrying a thousand shares of Jack-Pot mining stock. He had bought the stock when the mine was first opened, at a very low figure, and when it was running made considerable money out of it.

When the mine flooded, and the stock became worthless, he had often said that he had received more in dividends than he originally paid for it. He had been notified of the new company being formed with the intention of pumping out the mine, and had been trying to sell his stock to avoid paying assessments.

The morning that Robinson started his agents to purchase Jack-Pot mining stock, one of them said that he heard that Dempsey, the cotton broker, had about a thousand shares; and as he was a relative of Robinson's, he thought that Robinson would be the best man to see him about it.

Robinson was elated when he heard the news.

"The very thing," said he. "Here is a chance to get square with Dempsey at one single blow." Dempsey had not the inside facts of the mine as he had. "I'll go at once and see if the old skinflint will sell."

As Robinson entered the private sanctum of the magnate, Dempsey came forward with outstretched

hand, and grasping that of Robinson, treated him with the most profuse courtesy.

"Well, Robinson, this is an unexpected pleasure. How are you?"

"Oh, fair, still grinding along."

"What is there that I can do for you, Robinson?" he said in his most patronizing way.

"Well, Dempsey, I have just heard that you are carrying some Jack-Pot mining stock, and as a friend of mine wishes to invest in the stock, I thought I would call and see what you had."

Dempsey was a changed man in a minute, a fact which did not escape Robinson's notice.

"Just wait a minute, Robinson," said he, as he called to one of the clerks:

"Ask the manager to step this way."

As soon as the manager entered the office, Dempsey said:

"Mr. Brown, look over the books at once and see what amount of Jack-Pot stock we are carrying."

In a few minutes the manager returned with the report that there were exactly one thousand shares.

"Well, Robinson, do you think your friend would take all of them?"

"Yes, I believe he would if the price was right."

Dempsey knew the amount of shares he had, but thought it would have a greater effect on Robinson by assuming it was such a small affair that he had forgotten. It was his innate vanity that made him resort to these little subterfuges.

After a pause, Dempsey continued, saying:

"What—er—are you willing to pay for these shares, Robinson?"

"What are you asking for them?"

"Well—er—I don't know—er—exactly what they are worth."

Dempsey thought they were worthless, and chuckled inwardly at the thought of any one buying them.

"Yes," said he to himself, "I can now see what keeps Robinson's nose to the grindstone; always chasing some will-o'-the-wisp. Well, it's none of my business; but if there are fools in the world, so much the better for me. Lambs were born to have their wool clipped, and if Robinson, or anybody else, feels like growing wool for 'Old Boy Dempsey,' so much the better for Dempsey."

"I tell you what I'll do, Robinson; that stock originally cost me ninety dollars a share, but if you will take all of it, I'll make it fifty."

As a matter of fact, the shares originally cost Dempsey exactly ten dollars a share.

Robinson could see that Dempsey was eager to sell, and knowing his grasping nature was such that he would haggle all night for a dollar, was not afraid of offending him by offering a very low figure for the stock.

"I'll tell you what I'll do with you, Dempsey. I'll give you exactly fifteen dollars a share, and take all you've got."

When Dempsey offered Robinson the stock at fifty dollars a share, he was sounding Robinson, and was willing to take almost any price that Robinson would offer, but he was too shrewd to yield without, at least, a show of reluctance.

"Come, come,—Robinson, you're joking; fifteen

dollars for valuable stock like that—good gracious, man, make it forty, and I'll consider it."

Dempsey at this point arose, and going to a closet, brought out a bottle of sherry and a box of cigars. Filling two glasses, he said:

"Try that, Robinson, you'll find it the best, and these cigars are clear Havana."

Robinson had made up his mind to play a waiting game with Dempsey; he saw that Dempsey was eager to sell, and intended to make the most of his eagerness.

"Well, Robinson, what do you say to forty dollars for the stock? I think it is dirt cheap at that."

"Fifteen's my limit; I won't go beyond that, Dempsey. I only intended to pay ten dollars a share."

As the two Christian brothers-in-law sat watching each other, the one absorbing thought in their minds was to see which could get the better of the bargain. Robinson had a shade the advantage in the argument, as he stood ready to buy the stock, and had the inside information (as he supposed), as to the great strike of rich ore; Dempsey, on the other hand, thinking it was so much waste paper, was determined to get all he could out of his relation.

"Now, Robinson, if there is anything in the stock for you, I don't want to stand in the way of your making a little out of it. How does thirty-five strike you?"

"Not a cent more than fifteen, Dempsey; that's my limit."

After beating around the bush for some time, Dempsey finally came down to thirty, then twenty-five, and annoyed at the stubbornness of Robinson, said he'd be d—d if he would take a cent less.

This bluff on Dempsey's part had the desired effect

on Robinson, who, after a little argument, said :

"You offer it at twenty-five, I'll tell you what I'll do; we are ten dollars apart, I'll split the difference with you and give you twenty—take it or leave it, that's the utmost I'll give."

"The stock's yours," said Dempsey. "My, Robinson, but you can drive a hard bargain."

"Not quite so hard as you, Dempsey."

"Now the deal is settled, Robinson, let us drink success to the Jack-Pot mine."

Dempsey was now drinking wine to the success of the mine, later the very name of the mine was as wormwood to him.

While he was wondering where Robinson was going to get the money to pay for the stock, Robinson interrupted his thoughts by saying :

"I suppose we might as well settle for the stock at once."

"Just as you please, Robinson," replied Dempsey.

"I'll settle for it now, and then it is done with," and taking a seat at Dempsey's desk, made out a check for the amount.

When Dempsey received the check for the full amount signed by Robinson, he was struck with amazement—thinking :

"Where the devil did he get the money? I think the man's crazy; however, I'll soon find out."

"Give me a receipt for the money, and send the shares over as soon as you can."

"All right, Robinson, I'll do so at once."

As soon as Robinson departed, Dempsey called one of his clerks, saying :

"Take this check over to the Exchange Bank and

ask if there is enough money to his credit to pay it—stop—give me the check—call a hansom, I'll take no chances. If he's got the money in the bank, I want it. I'll run no risk of any one getting there before me; and if it's not there, he gets no stock from Dempsey."

Dempsey, on arriving at the bank, presented the check and was ready with a sarcastic smile on his face to hear the cashier say:

"There is not enough to Robinson's credit in the bank," but to his astonishment the cashier turned to the magnate, whom everybody in banking circles knew, and said:

"How will you have this, Mr. Dempsey?"

"All large notes," he replied.

Dempsey was like a man in a dream as he returned to his office. Once inside, he took off his coat, and pacing up and down, muttered:

"Where the mischief did he get the money?" It seemed like a dream. But it was not. No—he had sold the stock and got the money. "If Robinson is speculating with other people's money, it is none of my business; they will never get it back, it belongs to Dempsey, and what belongs to Dempsey is Dempsey's, ha! ha! ha! Robinson, you've burnt your fingers this time trying to come it over 'Old Boy Dempsey'; come again, Robinson.

"Just to think, I held that stock as worthless, and here comes that jay-hawk of a brother-in-law of mine with four thousand pounds; it's like finding it."

Walking into his sanctum to gloat over the morning's work, he threw back the dial, which left exposed to view the word "engaged." Placing a bottle of sherry on the table and lighting a fresh cigar, he be-

gan to moralize on fools and their money, and how the wise ones got it way from them.

Filling his glass and holding it up to the light with the air of a connoisseur, he said, as he commenced sipping the wine:

"Dempsey, old boy—your health." Filling the glass again, he continued:

"Yes, Dempsey, you're all right; they can't beat you; your health, old boy, your health."

Still musing, he continued:

"I suppose that chuckle-headed brother-in-law of mine thought to come it over me—always was a smart Aleck in his way, but he never really 'weighed' very much,—ha! ha!"

Once more filling his glass, he pondered over what Robinson was going to do with the stock.

That evening as he lay back in his luxurious coach, he carelessly turned to the foreign column of the Evening Echo, and as he did so was struck with amazement, for there in big headlines was announced the following:

WONDERFUL STRIKE OF ORE IN THE JACK POT MINE.

Denver, Colorado. — The new company recently organized to work the Jack Pot mine has been rewarded by the richest strike of ore ever taken from the mine.

Experts say that there is a million tons of high grade ore in sight. The New York stock market shows the greatest excitement, and the stock of the mine is rapidly advancing.

The paper fell from Dempsey's hand—the biter had been bitten.



CHAPTER XVIII.

AFTER Robinson had paid for the shares he had bought from Dempsey; also for the large amount of stock his numerous agents had procured for him, the first thing that dawned upon him was that all the collateral and money in the bank, also the entire estate he held in trust for Jenkins' niece, had vanished. This brought him to a full stop—it was now riches or the penitentiary—the next twenty-four hours would decide his fate. Smiling grimly, he said:

“Well, I’m in for it now, and come what may, I’ll see it through.”

CHAPTER XIX.

THE stock of the Jack-Pot mine is steadily rising, and Robinson is becoming rich.

As the market price of the stock advanced, Robinson had two distinct firms of brokers manipulating it. The shrewdest and best known of these with great display appeared to be buying all the stock in sight, but in reality, while the army of purchasers were continually increasing, he was quietly unloading for treble the amount it had cost.

Robinson’s clients at this time swooped down on him, not caring to trust their money to so bold a speculator. Some accepted stock at the market price; others demanded their money and securities.



CHAPTER XX.

THE dream of Mrs. Robinson's life, should her husband ever become rich, was to give a ball that for splendor would surprise the oldest inhabitant of Oxtou. Often had she so planned. Many times, when her husband had taken a case on a contingency fee where the amount at stake was extraordinarily large, and his share in proportion, he would tell her that if he won, she could then make the dream of her life a reality. Now that her daughter Ruth was approaching womanhood, and Robinson had made so much money, she was determined to see her air castle materialized.

Robinson at the present time was very much sought after; he was becoming the lion of the hour; consequently, Mrs. Robinson had not his society as much as usual; but keeping him home one evening, she went into the details of the ball she had in view; also the refurnishing of their house; buying the same, building a wing and erecting stables for the horses she intended purchasing. Robinson replied by saying:

"Get all you want, my dear; don't bother me, go ahead. Let them send in their bills, I'll see that they're paid."

Not being able to get all the furniture she desired in Liverpool, she journeyed to London, and while there made a contract with a firm that had the best reputation, to come to Birkenhead to refurnish and redecorate the Robinson residence.

When Mrs. Robinson had everything she thought she desired (being a woman, this was in thought only), she said:

"I've stood the snubs of these Oxtonians for the past fifteen years; it's my turn now, and I'll see to it that they are paid back in their own coin. I'll let them see that the Robinsons are their equals, if not their superiors."



CHAPTER XXI.

ROBINSON'S office has undergone considerable change since he went into the stock market. From the staid law office of formerly, it has now more the appearance of a broker's than anything else. A stock ticker, with its "click, click, click," and two extra clerks, give the office a busy appearance.

Going to the broker who was acting for him in manipulating the mining stock, he was pleased to hear as soon as he entered the office that the stock was strong and the market steady; also, that the notoriety it had achieved had swelled the army of buyers. As the broker came towards Robinson, he held out his hand, saying:

✧ "Shake, Robinson; you've done old skinflint Dempsey to the Queen's taste. I'll bet he was just about crazy last night when he read in the evening papers that article about the rich strike."

While everybody, including the curbstome brokers, were talking Jack-Pot stock, a rumor was circulated that the glowing accounts of the rich strike of ore reported to have been found, existed only in the imagination of the stockbrokers' brains.

When this report struck the stock market, the scene around the brokers that were dealing in Jack-Pot beggars description. Men were frantically gesticulating, as they threw out their hands, pointing with their fingers the number of shares they wanted to sell. Those who had been bulling the stock turned bears in their anxiety to get from under. Down the toboggan slide went the stock at every beat of the ticker.

One of the first persons to hear this rumor was Dempsey, and a look of intense satisfaction was plainly depicted on his countenance.

"I knew it! I knew it!" was his first exclamation. "I hope that d——d brother-in-law of mine is wiped out. I wonder if he will try to protect the stock. I hear that he has made a million dollars. Yes, a million! Just think of it! A chuckle-head like that—and the way people are talking about him, and the airs he is putting on! By gad, I hope he is caught with his holdings, and that the very bottom will drop out of the stock."

Brooding over this, the viper, revenge, gradually took possession of him in his hatred against his brother-in-law.

"Why the devil can't I give him a shove down hill, and at the same time try and get my money back? Everything is fair in the stock market."

Calling a cab, he gave orders to be driven to a certain broker's office close to the stock exchange.

"Hello, 'Turn" (this to the broker whom he was addressing, and who, the brokers said, was appropriately named on account of his propensity to turn according to the way he thought his customers wanted to go in their stock speculations).

"Well, Dempsey, what can I do for the Chief?"

"What do you think of the market?" queried Dempsey.

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied 'Turn. "It's feverish, very." This left the broker in a noncommittal position.

"Feverish, feverish!" exclaimed Dempsey. "Why, they are just crazy on Change, selling the Jack-Pot

stock. Do you think they are going to prick the bubble?"

Not giving 'Turn time to reply, Dempsey continued:

"I tell you, 'Turn, I think the bottom is falling out of the stock, and ~~that~~ there is a chance for me to get square."

'Turn had made his point; he saw which way Dempsey wanted to go.

"Well, Dempsey, I'll give you my candid opinion, and that is, I never thought much of the stock."

"See here, 'Turn," said Dempsey, "I want your assistance in taking a fall out of Robinson. He ~~has~~ got so d——d conceited that there is no standing him, and besides, you know he got that stock out of me in an underhanded way!"

'Turn looked wise, but remained silent.

"Say, 'Turn," continued Dempsey, "what do you think of me selling a thousand shares short? They are pounding the devil out of it, and I ought to make enough to get back the difference between what he paid me and the market price of the stock the day after the rich strike became known. I have since learned that he had the information of the rich strike when he came to see me about the stock."

"Capital — By Jove, Dempsey, the very thing — a wise move."

"All right, 'Turn; go to the exchange and sell to no one but Robinson's brokers. I'll bust him before I get through with him."

After giving his orders, Dempsey left the office with a self-satisfied expression on his face.

The stock, which was gradually being forced down, declined six points in as many minutes. At this time

in came 'Turn with a coterie of followers with heavy orders to sell, for the news flashed on the ticker, told of the great bear raid in Jack-Pot stock on the New York stock exchange; this, in conjunction with the heavy selling that had already begun in Liverpool, caused a panic in the stock.

Robinson all this time was sitting in his office with the tape in his hands, and as it ran through his fingers, watched the automatic working of the machine as it ticked off the great decline. He had unbounded confidence in the Jack-Pot mine. He could see nothing in its future but the wildest dreams of riches.

"This must be stopped at all hazards," exclaimed he, and ringing up the head of the concern of stock brokers who were manipulating the deal for him, got that gentleman on the phone; the broker hung up the receiver and hurried into the ring of brokers who were hammering down the stock. Fortunately for Robinson, Royal and his coterie, who had been steadily booming the stock, but were not at this time ready to unload, were now moving all the power and money they had to hold up the stock, and as the Robinson forces began to buy from the eager sellers, the forces of Royal were doing the same in New York.

'Turn's intuition through long experience on Change saw the stock recovering itself, and getting Dempsey on the phone, advised him to close out, which he then could at a profit.

"Not on your life, 'Turn," was Dempsey's reply.

"Like all the rest of the bull-heads, they think they know more than people that have spent a lifetime on Change. It looks to me as if the stock would reassert itself."

When the New York prices were quoted on the ticker in Liverpool, in conjunction with Robinson's steady purchasing, the stock advanced rapidly, the bears being put to rout, and the army of shorts got the worst squeezing they had received in many a day.

Dempsey was now in a frightful rage and walked up and down his office like a caged lion. The stock was still going up steadily.

Calling a cab, he gave the man orders to drive to 'Turn's office.

"Well, what do you think of the market now?" said he to the broker.

"There's somebody playing a strong hand," replied 'Turn, "and if the bubble could be pricked, you can gamble on it, the stock would come down like a house of cards."

"'Turn, this has gone far enough. Just fancy, I'm now out \$21,000. The bitterness of it is to think that the man I was trying to down has downed me. He paid me \$20,000 for the stock; you sold a thousand shares short to his brokers; it has cost me \$21,000 to make good my loss; that gives Robinson the stock for nothing, and another thousand for taking it off my hands. Have you thought of any way that I can get square with him?"

"It's a case of 'wait' Dempsey—there's nothing else for it."

"Wait, you say. See here, 'Turn, I've made up my mind to go through with this deal. I'm not going quietly to lie down and see that brother-in-law of mine have the laugh on me. If it takes the last dollar I have, I'll get square. Yes, d—n him, I'll crush the life out of him. That man's name is a nightmare to me."

CHAPTER XXII.

DEMPSEY slept very little that night, and after looking over his mail the following morning, went direct to his broker's.

"Well, what do you know this morning? Have you heard anything?"

"I've just received a telegram, Dempsey, from a confidential broker friend of mine in London, asking if I have any inside information concerning the stock, and you can depend upon it, when a stock is so mysterious there's a screw loose somewhere."

"You say there's a screw loose. Have you got any plan formed whereby we can find the loose screw?"

"Dempsey, I lay awake nearly all night, thinking of some scheme whereby we could bust that upstart. I never felt so annoyed in my life as I do at your losing this \$21,000; it's too bad, Dempsey, but, by gad, we'll get square before we are through with Robinson."

"Turn, I'm determined to go through with this deal to the very end, and have mapped out the following plan, subject to your approval.

"I want a man that knows his business, and he must get into that mine. Have you the right people on your staff in New York who could work out such a scheme, and after they had obtained the information, be depended upon not to sell you out?"

"Dempsey," exclaimed Turn, "I've been doing business with a firm in New York that has a reputation



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for honesty that no one ever doubted."

"See here, 'Turn, this information must be right, mind you, I want nothing taken for granted. This firm of brokers in New York that you speak of may be all right—but I haven't much faith in those Yanks. When I first started in the cotton brokerage business, I took a trip to the States, and got into a deal through their advice; and the upshot of it was, that they left me high and dry without as much money as would make a jingle on a tombstone. Look out for them, 'Turn, they're slick. Yes, d——d slick."

"This firm is all right, Dempsey, members of the stock exchange, and been doing business in New York for twenty years."

"Well, have them procure this information, and send in the bill to you, I'll see it's paid."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE pinching and scraping Mrs. Robinson had undergone during the past fifteen years of her married life had left the marks of much worryment on her face. The crows-feet around the eyes, of which women, and no inconsiderable number of men, stand in such dread, were there, and persons calling at her residence previous to the Robinsons' rise to affluence, would have put her down as a clever woman, but one who had evidently seen considerable trouble. Since the Robinsons had emerged from their long siege of pecuniary embarrassment to their present position in society, people were telling Mrs. Robinson that she looked ten years younger. She certainly did look five years younger than before Robinson's lucky strike in Jack-Pot stock. Her face had a more rounded appearance; the crows-feet under its increasing rotundity having vanished as if by magic, while the hard lines that had formed about her mouth seemingly have disappeared; and her care-worn expression was now replaced by a smile of geniality that was a pleasure to behold.

Mrs. Robinson was a rather prepossessing woman; and now that the Robinson household was supplied with the best of this world's goods, and all scrimping and scraping had disappeared, giving way to a round of gayety, which seems to have infused itself into her blood, as is evidenced by the marked effect it appears to have on her. She to a certain extent has renewed her youth; and the continual serenity that she is enjoying shines in her countenance.

What has worked all this change? GOLD!



CHAPTER XXIV.

THE Robinsons have purchased the house they live in; built a new wing which comprises a large ball room, and erected the finest stables in Oxton.

The next step in Mrs. Robinson's career, now that her house was furnished in the most exquisite and luxurious style, and the stables finished, which, in point of architecture, were superior to the residence, was to purchase horses to occupy them.

Mrs. Robinson was so exacting that it seemed almost impossible to procure a team that would suit her; and the horse dealer were almost at their wits' ends, when one of them called on her with the information that Mr. Tallow, the millionaire soap dealer, was going abroad, and that if he could obtain his price, he would sell his team that had won the blue ribbon at the late horse show.

As each team of carriage horses drew up for the inspection of Mrs. Robinson, the neighbors would hide behind curtains and comment on the arrogance of such upstarts flaunting their wealth before their eyes.

When Robinson was plodding on from day to day, with no prospects at the time of ever being any better off pecuniarily, his neighbors were accustomed to look down on him, and with a friendly smile say to those they happened to be with at the time, "Poor devil, he's got a hard row to hoe, and will have his nose to the grindstone as long as he lives."

There was no need then to be jealous of the Robinsons; Robinson was a good fellow, but would never amount to anything. But now that the Robinsons had at one single bound sprung above them, and were riding over them in pomp and splendor, it was entirely different. Their jealousy was aroused; and all the impecuniosities that the Robinsons had undergone for the past fifteen years were discussed and rehashed in a petty and jealous spirit; but while these same loving neighbors of the Robinsons tore them to tatters behind closed doors, they were very profuse and ready with a show of homage whenever they happened to meet any of the Robinson family since their acquisition of wealth. When the brokers, lawyers, and business men who resided in Oxton, and who had their offices in Liverpool, arrived home each evening, they generally brought with them the latest gossip and tidbits that had gone the rounds of the business circles during the day. These tidbits were devoured with great eagerness and relish by their wives; and when they heard that the Robinsons were still "piling them up," (as the Americans call it) they said:

"We shall all have to take a back seat now, and let Mrs. Robinson have the social leadership."



CHAPTER XXV.

AT LAST the pair of prize winners arrived; they were attached to the millionaire's brougham, which, with its trappings and coat-of-arms emblazoned on the panels, made the most ostentatious display.

As the team pranced and capered in front of the Robinson residence, there was an unusual craning of necks from behind curtains to see the latest and most splendid pair of horses that had as yet been submitted for Mrs. Robinson's inspection. The fact that they had received first prize for the best matched pair of carriage horses in England, spoke volumes for their appearance.

Mrs. Robinson was delighted with them. The unusual attention and notoriety they would attract on account of being the winners of the blue ribbon was something of which she felt inwardly proud.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE firm of Todd & Co. of New York, the week following Dempsey's visit to 'Turn, the broker, received a rather bulky letter from the Liverpool stock broker. The contents of this letter gave the firm carte blanche to procure the information about the mine, as dictated to the broker 'Turn, by his customer, Dempsey.

Touching one of the electric enunciators on his desk, the office boy appeared in response.

"Here, boy, run over to Earth & Hall's and inquire if Mr. Meek is there. Come here, what's that you've got?"

Todd, here suiting the action to his query, took out of the pocket of the boy a copy of the "Young American."

"I'll keep this until you return," said he, at the same time reading the riot act to the boy, telling him that such trash would surely lead him into the penitentiary. As the boy proceeded on his errand, Todd commenced to glance over the paper he had taken from him, and was becoming interested when the boy appeared.

"What did Earth & Hall say? Have they seen Meek?"

"Yes, sir, he's attending to some business for them, and will call on you directly."

In a few minutes the office door opened, and in walked Mr. Meek.

"What are you driving at now, Meek?"



"Nothing of any importance."

"How would you like to go to Denver?"

"Just the thing, sir; I've been dying to get there for many a year, as I believe it would help to cure this complaint of mine."

"What do you know about Jack-Pot mining stock?"

"Nothing."

"Now, Meek, I'll explain matters to you. I want a man to go to Denver; and if possible gain the confidence of the manager of the Jack-Pot mine; and find out the true condition of the same. If this man can't be got at, then the information must be procured; how, we leave entirely to the ingenuity of the man we send. I believe, Meek, you're the man to gain the information we want; and if you do you won't have to worry about your board bill for the next year at least."

The following morning Meek sent in his card, and was immediately ushered into Todd's private office.

"Meek, this is a book that contains our code of cipher correspondence. Just pull your chair closer and I'll give you an idea how it works."

After perusing it for some time together, Meek said:

"I see through it, Todd, and as soon as I get to Denver will study it thoroughly."

Todd, after shaking hands with Meek and wishing him success, mused as Meek left the office:

"If there's a possibility of any man procuring the information, Meek's the man."

CHAPTER XXVII.

ONE evening while Royal was surrounded at his club by fellow members whom he was amusing with the latest jokes and quips of the day, a broker by the name of Wainright, one of the shrewdest on the "Street," called him aside, saying:

"Royal, I would like a little private conversation with you."

"What about, Wainright?"

"Come, let us go to some quiet corner, and I'll tell you."

As they were seated at a table in one of the private rooms of the club, the waiter having retired, Wainright, leaning back in his chair as he took his cigar out of his mouth, said:

"What do you know, Royal, about that 'mystery'—Jack-Pot stock?"

"You've got me this time, Wainright," smilingly answered Royal, "I dropped a little in that myself."

"I didn't know whether you knew anything about it or not," answered Wainright, "but I'd sooner have your opinion than anybody's I know; besides, I may possibly put you in the way of making a few thousand in a day or so—perhaps to-morrow."

"Why not to-night?" asked Royal.

"I've given my word not to let the 'cat out of the bag'; but depend upon it, Royal, you'll be the first to get the tip."

Royal was in a dilemma. Wainright had hinted



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that he had the information respecting the mine, or would have in a day or two. He dare not show his hand by appearing too anxious; but it was imperative that he should know; and addressing Wainright, said, in order to throw him off his guard:

"Unless I knew all of the inside facts and where the tip came from, I would not touch it at any price."

"When this comes, Royal, you can bank on it being all right."

"Well, let me know as soon as you can, as I am anxious to get back what I lost in that stock."

"You'll be the first to get the tip as soon as I dare tell you."

"Then you haven't the information yet?" (This was a home thrust to see what Wainright knew.)

"All I can tell you at present, Royal, is this—I may know to-morrow; then, if not to-morrow, the day after at the latest."

"Well, I suppose it will keep, Wainright; let us shoot a couple of games."

During the game Wainright mentioned the stock again, Royal telling him that he ought to be very careful.

"You can bet your last dollar, Royal, when this comes it will be the best that ever came over the pike."

"Well, if it's going to be that good, Wainright, put me next as soon as it arrives."

After the game Royal went to the phone and made a pretense of calling up one of his cronies. Putting up the receiver with a slight show of impatience, he said:

"Phones are a nuisance."

Once outside of the club, he walked rapidly to the Plaza Hotel, and sent a cipher dispatch to Harvey,

admonishing him to use extra caution about the mine's secrets; then taking a seat at the writing desk, sent him a letter telling him what he had heard from Wainright.

Next morning Royal received a dispatch from Harvey, stating that everything was running smoothly at the mine.

The boom that Royal and his forces had been steadily creating in Jack-Pot stock was nipped in the bud through the bear movement; and instead of realizing a fortune, they had to protect the stock at a heavy loss; then the summer coming on, they decided to wait until fall before commencing another boom.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE broker Wainright, with other members of his clique, had been carrying quite a large amount of *jack-Pot* stock, and as they could not obtain any reliable information about the mine, and hearing all kinds of rumors, were in a dilemma. The report at one time was, that the stock would soon be worth more than the great "*Comstock*" ever sold for; and at other times, that it was puffed.

One of the clique, by the name of Edward Carter, or as his friends called him, "*Teddy*," said:

"What's the use of us getting excited at every idle rumor we hear; then after a meeting going back to our offices, and at every click of the ticker, phoning all around, and asking what we had better do? What I propose is, that we send a good man out to the mine, and give him all the scope he requires; not hamper him by too many instructions, but let him use his own judgment and get us the information we want. I've got quite a lot of the stock, and would like to know where I'm at before doing anything with it."

"Is it possible to get such a man as you speak of, *Teddy*? The trouble is, they spend all the money you give them, have a good time at your expense, and end by selling you out," replied Wainright.

"You've heard my plan, gentlemen," said *Teddy* Carter, "now I'm willing to listen to any other that you gentlemen wish to propose."

"I think *Teddy* is right, gentlemen," spoke one of

the clique. "We had better all chip in and place the matter in his hands."

"Go ahead, Teddy, get your man, send him to Denver, and we'll stand our share of the expenses."

As soon as Teddy Carter arrived at his office, he dictated a letter to Richard Freeman.

The next morning when Carter arrived at his office, Freeman was there waiting for him.

"Hello, Dick, good morning, how are you?" at the same time shaking hands with Freeman.

"Never felt better in my life, Teddy."

- "Here's the Herald; take a look through it while I open the mail; then we'll have a pow-wow together. I've got something on hand that I think will just suit you."

"Don't hurry, Teddy, nothing on this morning."

Freeman, after reading the paper, put it aside, and was in the act of lighting a cigar when Carter, opening the door of his private office, called:

"Dick, come right in, I'm ready for you."

Freeman had scarcely been seated before Carter addressed him, saying:

"How would you like to leave the city for a time, Dick?"

"I'm not particular, Teddy, if there is any money in it."

"I'll tell you all about it. Wainright, some of the boys and myself, have been loading up with Jack-Pot stock, and don't know where we are at, having heard all kinds of stories about it. Would you undertake the task to procure for us the true condition of affairs at the mine?"



"Well, Teddy, I'm willing to try, and when I say that, you can rest assured I'll never come back to New York without it."

"Give me your hand, Dick, I like to hear a man talk like that. It has the true ring to it."

"When do you wish me to start, Teddy?"

"To-day, if possible."

"Make it to-morrow; I've got a few things to straighten out."

"All right. Call at the club to-night, and we'll talk over the final details."

That night Carter and Freeman matured their plans, and the following day saw Freeman on his way to Colorado. Arriving at Denver, and emerging from the depot, he climbed into the first conveyance he saw, which happened to be one from the Albany Hotel.

After a bath and a tour of the city, he retired with the intention of rising early.

"To throw off suspicion, I suppose I'd better have some business to attend to, as it won't do to hang around here doing nothing; and I don't know anything better for making a bluff than insurance. At that business a man can poke his nose in any place, and while he runs the risk of being kicked out and the door slammed in his face, there is very little suspicion attached to him, as there is no place sacred to insurance men."

Leaning on the desk one evening, talking to the night clerk, the conversation drifted until mines and mining were discussed.

"Have you ever been down in any of the gold mines?" inquired Freeman.

"No, sir; I've never had that pleasure; but would

like to see how they get the precious metal. I have often thought of asking Mr. Harvey, the manager of the Jack-Pot mine, to take me back with him to Black Hawk; he comes in here occasionally."

"Well, if you get permission from this gentleman you speak of, ask him if you can take a friend along."

"All right, I'll do so, Mr. Freeman."

Freeman was now nicely located and waiting very patiently for Harvey to materialize. He had been there about a week, when, as he was gossiping with the clerk one evening, a young man came to the desk and asked if Mr. Harvey had arrived. Upon being answered in the negative, he said:

"That's strange; he promised to meet me here an hour ago."

While the clerk was answering the gentleman, in walked Harvey.

Harvey, having shaken hands with the young gentleman, walked to the clerk and asked if there was any mail for him.

"None at all, Mr. Harvey," replied the clerk. "Mr. Harvey, allow me to introduce you to Mr. Freeman, a friend of mine."

"How d'you do, sir? I'm glad to meet you. Just arrived?" inquired Harvey.

"I've been here about a week," replied Freeman.

"From New York?"

"Chicago."

"Going to stay in Denver?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, success to you," replied Harvey.

"Take one of my cards, Mr. Harvey, and if you want anything in the insurance line, I hope you won't forget me."

"Mr. Harvey," said the clerk, "when are going to take me back with you to Black Hawk and show me through the mine; also my friend, here, Mr. Freeman?"

"Gentlemen, it's against the rules."

"I'm sorry it's against the rules," answered Freeman, "as I would have liked very much to see you dig the gold."

"Well, you know rules are rules, and have to be obeyed."

"I suppose you're right," replied Freeman, as he wished Harvey good-day.

When Harvey gained the street, he mused and pondered over his meeting with Freeman—this and the telegram of Royal's asking him to use extra caution, set him thinking.

"I don't think that fellow is after any insurance. He seemed mighty interested in mining, and I can't account for it, but I've an idea that he has been sent here to spy into the secrets of the mine."

Passing out of the hotel, Harvey ran into Freeman, who stopped him, saying:

"I think I've got one of the best locations in the city, Mr. Harvey, and when I get fixed up you must call and see me, as I am anxious to get acquainted; perhaps there'll be a possibility of writing you up for ten thousand."

This was a good move on the part of Freeman, and helped wonderfully to throw Harvey off his guard. Freeman seemed so anxious to write him up that Harvey, who had a dread of all insurance agents, was equally as anxious to get away, having an idea once insured he would not live long.

"Do you carry any insurance, Mr. Harvey?"

"No, sir; I don't (very emphatically), and don't want any."

"Well, when I get fixed up come to my office, and I'll show you the best policy ever put before the public."

"I'll call on one condition; that is, you'll never ask to insure me."

"Well, come in and see me, Mr. Harvey, and I'll promise you I won't talk shop."



CHAPTER XXIX.

GOING away, Mr. Freeman?" inquired the clerk of the Albany.

"I'm going to our main office in Chicago, and shall not be back for a few days; keep all letters until I return."

"All right, Mr. Freeman; if anything comes I'll take care of it."

Next morning Freeman took the train for Leadville, and registered as Arthur Smith. The same day there appeared an advertisement in the Leadville papers, as follows:

"Wanted—A good miner to join prospecting party; all expenses and good pay to the right man. Apply Hotel Vendome."

"Well," exclaimed Freeman, "I wonder how this will work; the bottom dropped out of the other scheme. I couldn't work that fellow Harvey, and knew the moment I saw him it was no go."

While perusing the morning paper, there came a knock on the door.

"Come in," called Freeman, and, as the door opened, two men confronted him, who, judging by their appearance, were evidently miners.

"Is this Mr. Smith?" queried one of them.

"Yes; I guess I'm the man you're looking for. Did you come in reference to the advertisement in the paper?"

"Yes, sir," said the man who had first answered Freeman.

"Well," said Freeman to himself after the miners departed, "they certainly are miners, and possibly good prospectors; but I don't want two, and the man I hire must be of a different calibre than either of those."

Late that night Freeman made his way to the Miner's Arms. He had found out during the day that "Old Bill," the landlord, had been a miner, and knew all the miners in and around Leadville.

Ordering drinks, Freeman began by asking the landlord if he saw the advertisement in the paper, and if he sent the two men to the hotel.

"Yes, sir; I did," replied "Old Bill," as he invited Freeman to come into his sanctum, a small room inside the bar.

"Now, Bill," said Freeman, after they had taken their seats. "I suppose you don't object to me calling you 'Bill'?"

"No, sir; that's all I get around here."

"Well, Bill, it's this way. I've got some friends coming here to Leadville, and we're going prospecting. We want a man, an expert miner, one who thoroughly understands the different qualities of gold ore."

Freeman, after describing the kind of man he wanted, was patiently waiting and all attention to hear if the landlord knew of such a man, but Old Bill sat and smoked without moving a muscle.

A person looking into the room from a certain angle, and not seeing the cause of the jets of smoke propelled by the strong lung power of Old Bill, would have put it down to an exhaust pipe, so dense and regular were they.



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Freeman's patience, as he waited for Old Bill to speak, was well nigh exhausted, when, in a calm, measured manner, that worthy took the pipe out of his mouth. Looking at Freeman with great attention as he pointed the stem of his pipe toward him, he appeared about to break the silence, then as calmly replaced the pipe between his lips, and continued smoking without speaking a word. This was too much for Freeman, as with a loud "phew," he jumped from his chair and commenced to pace up and down the room.

However, everything comes to an end, and at last Old Bill once more took the pipe out of his mouth, saying:

"I've got him! I've got him! Yes, sir; the very man. Can't beat him. I've had him all the time. Why didn't I think of him before? Yes, sir; Silent's the man."

Old Bill spoke as if this man or men of whom he was talking were kept as goods laid away in his cellar.

"What do you say his name is?" inquired Freeman.

"Silent."

"Has he a still tongue?" inquired Freeman.

"Still tongue, did you say? He never speaks to any one, and that's why they call him Silent. Some say he's killed a man and it preys upon his mind. I wish some of the fellows that hang around here would go and kill somebody. But whatever he's done, he's dead square, and I'll recommend him to any one."

The next day, after breakfast, Freeman retired to his room to await the arrival of the miner.

"Come in," said Freeman, in answer to a knock on the door.

The door opened, and a man entered whose calling

there was not the least possibility of any one mistaking.

Approaching Freeman with a look that was most respectful, though fearless, he said:

"Is this Mr. Smith?"

"Yes," answered Freeman. "Won't you take a seat?"

After the miner was seated, Freeman, continuing, said:

"I suppose Bill, the landlord, told you what I wanted a man for?"

"Yes," replied the miner.

Freeman was greatly impressed with the calm, patient and manly way in which the miner conducted himself while listening to all he had to say; this, together with his striking appearance, the firm grip of the hand, and the candid, wholesome expression of the face,—a face without the slightest trace of chicanery, with an eye that denoted the very essence of candor,—made an impression on Freeman. He made up his mind then and there to lay bare to this man the plot to get a true condition of the Jack-Pot mine.

"I've made up my mind, Silent, to trust you and tell you all that I want you to do."

Silent listened patiently to all Freeman said, and after considering the matter for some time, said:

"Mr. Smith, I'm sorry, indeed I am, that I cannot go into this for you. First, because you appear to me to be a good square fellow, and not like a great many of the Eastern sharks that I have come across in some of my mining deals. You see, sir, your proposition is one whereby I would have to betray the trust of a man who engaged me to look after his interests, and as I have never in all my life done anything that I need be



ashamed of, I don't want to begin now, and if anybody but a man like yourself had proposed such a proposition, I am afraid that I would have used more forcible language."

To say that Freeman was thunderstruck is putting it mildly. He was completely, as the baseball players say, "knocked out of the box." Could it be possible that a rough miner like this could teach him a lesson? Here was a man working by the day for a living, refusing to earn a thousand dollars, solely on account of a so-called principle. This, in the opinion of Freeman, was a case for the sociologist to wrestle with, momentarily he despised himself.

"Yes," he thought, "I'm known in Wall street as Honest Dick Freeman. If they call me such, what would they say to this fellow, Silent, who turns down a thousand dollars on general principles?"

He was so put out for the moment that he forgot all about the presence of the miner. At last he said:

"Do you mean what you say, Mr. Silent?"

"Yes, sir; every word of it."

"Well, will you have something to drink, and a cigar, before you go?"

"I don't mind if I do."

After the waiter had brought in the drinks and cigars, Freeman said:

"Do you know where I'd be likely to get such a man as I require?"

"There's only too many of them around here that would sell themselves to the very devil for a little money, and I don't think you will have any difficulty in getting the man you want."

"Well, I've got your promise that you won't tell any one what I want the man for, as you most likely will be asked all particulars when you get back to the Miner's Arms."

"Yes, sir; you may depend upon my word."

CHAPTER XXX.

AFTER the miner, Silent, had departed, Freeman put on his hat and coat and started for a walk into the country.

“By Jove!” he exclaimed, as he walked along, - knocking off with his walking stick the heads of various shrubs that grew by the wayside. “Who ever would have expected a man like Silent to throw away a thousand dollars? Why, in the ‘Street’ I could name half a dozen who would have sold themselves twice over for half the amount.”

Late that night, Freeman made another trip to the Miner’s Arms.

“Come around this time to-morrow night, Mr. Smith, and I’ll have a man for you.”

Old Bill could have sent a man to Freeman the next morning, but he was thinking of Old Bill’s interest in the line of sundry cigars and wine—this fellow Smith was worth nursing.

The next night, as Freeman entered the Miner’s Arms, Old Bill jumped from his chair.

“Good evening, Mr. Smith,” said he, as he led the way into his den.

“Good evening, Bill,” answered Freeman.

As Freeman passed through the bar room he noticed a man lounging in an easy attitude against the bar. The man, on seeing Freeman, turned and gave him a look which, had it not been for the good-natured smile that played around the lines of his mouth, might have been taken for insolence. He was a man of about forty years of age, raw-boned and rugged, with a look of calm indifference as to what was or would be likely to take place. After Freeman had taken his seat, Old Bill beckoned to the man leaning against the bar; then as the miner came toward him, he approached Freeman, saying:

"Mr. Smith, this is my friend 'Pete,' and about what we were talking of last night (this with an air of familiarity to convey the idea to Pete that Old Bill stood in with Smith in the business on hand), can say that I'll recommend my friend Pete to go anywhere and do anything that it's possible for a man to do. How about that, Pete?"

Pete simply smiled as he looked from one to the other.

When all three were seated, Freeman gave an order for cigars and a bottle of wine.

"The same cigars as you had last night?" (this with a knowing look at Pete).

"Yes, they'll do."

After a little further conversation, Freeman said he would have to go, and giving his card to Pete, told him to call at the hotel the next day and they would get down to business.

After Freeman's departure, Old Bill, with an air of self-conscious superiority, sat back in his chair. The bottle of wine Freeman had paid for was almost full,

and the thought that he would be the prime mover in diminishing the contents of the same, added to his good humor. Filling two glasses, he said, as he gave one to Pete, while he gazed lovingly on the other as he held it in his hand:

"Pete, you've got the chance of your life. If there ever was a 'white' man, that fellow Smith is the one."

"How did he come to call upon you, Bill?"

"Oh, some friends of mine down East rek'mended him to see me about getting him a man. Nothing like having a good reputation, Pete, my boy."

"Did he give you any information as to what he wanted a man for?" inquired Pete.

"You're to go along with him on a prospecting trip, and that's not the best of it, as he gave me to understand that if the man suits him, he can fix his own wages. You can't ask anything better than that, Pete."

"That's all right, Bill, but I thought that he might have given you all particulars."

Old Bill had no suspicion whatever, and thought that Freeman wanted a man to go, as he said, prospecting; but when Silent refused to accompany Freeman, Old Bill then became suspicious. Not wishing Pete to think that he had not been made a confidant of by Freeman, Old Bill, in very forcible language, answered:

"See here, Pete, when a man places confidence in Old Bill, and tells him to keep this or that to himself, from what you know of me, Pete, isn't it as good as buried? Am I right or not?"

Pete, who had a large vein of humor, smiled as he replied:

"Right you are, Bill; mum's the word."

"That's what I say, Pete, and any one that says Old Bill ever peached on anybody,—why, damn me,—I'd perforate his hide before the lie was cold."

Pete and Bill had by this time consumed the wine, and the landlord, knowing there was no more money in sight, made quiet suggestions for Pete to get out.

"I'll see you to-morrow."

"All right, Pete; give Mr. Smith my regards."



CHAPTER XXXI.

THE following morning after breakfast, Freeman purchased the daily papers and returning to his room, anxiously awaited the coming of the miner.

"Come in," said he, in response to a knock on the door. "Ah, Pete, good morning; I see you are on time. Take a chair and light a cigar," at the same time offering him one.

"Now, Pete, we might as well get down to business at once," said Freeman.

"I'm ready for your proposition, Mr. Smith."

"My proposition, Pete, is this: I want you to get a job in a certain mine, which I will tell you about later, and find out all you can, and how it is conducted, and if you think the place is kept running for a bluff, or whether it is paying expenses."

"If I understand you right, Mr. Smith, you want a report as to whether the mine is a dead one, or whether it is a bonanza."

"You've hit the nail on the head, Pete."

"Well, I believe in everybody looking out for number one, and if that's the case, I'll make it a go."

"You know, Pete, a thousand as soon as I get the right information, and here is a hundred to carry you along till then."

"I want the money, and depend upon it, I'll waste no time once I strike Black Hawk."

CHAPTER XXXII.

WHEN Freeman arrived in Denver he proceeded directly to his hotel, and after looking over his mail, took a bath, dined, then sauntered into the billiard room. Passing one of the tables he saw a middle-aged gentleman playing, or rather amusing himself (for he was alone), with the billiard balls. Freeman stopped to watch him make a shot; he missed what he was trying for, and looking up, saw Freeman watching him. With a kindly smile he returned Freeman's gaze, and went on trying to make the shot. He missed again; this time Freeman forcibly smiled, and the gentleman joined him, as it were, and said:

"I must make this—I used to do it easily." However, upon trying once more, he again failed.

"That's rather a difficult shot, sir," said Freeman.

"Yes," answered the gentleman, "but I've made it four out of five times, and don't understand why I can't do it to-night."

"Do you mind playing a game?"

"Not at all," replied Freeman.

After they had spotted the red ball, and were about to shoot to see who should commence play, the gentleman presented his card to Freeman.

"Ah,—thanks," said Freeman. "Allow me to return the compliment." Freeman read the card—"Mr. Arthur Meek, Chicago."

"Been here long, Mr. Meek?"

"About two weeks. I came here to see if I could recover my health; I've been rather poorly for some time."

"Well, they say it's one of the best health resorts in the country, Mr. Meek."

"I think well of the place; I'm already beginning to feel its beneficial effects."

"I see by your card, Mr. Freeman, you're in the insurance business. Well, I'm not afraid of you as an insurance man, as I know none of your companies would accept me as a risk."

This was said in a most gentlemanly way, with a little, good-natured laugh at his own expense.

"I don't know, Mr. Meek; you don't look so very sick."

As the game progressed, a student of the same would at once have seen that Meek was the better player; but he was so adroit in just missing shots, as it were, by a hair, that unless a man was an expert he could not tell that Meek was playing possum.

Freeman, on the other hand, was playing the game of his life. Once it began, he went in to win, and never would acknowledge defeat until it was over.

"When do I get my revenge?" said Meek, who had cleverly managed to lose the game.

"Well!" exclaimed Freeman, "if convenient for you—to-morrow night."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MEEL and Freeman arrived in Denver within a few days of each other, but the night in the billiard room was the first time they had met, each thinking how adroitly he had accounted to the other for his presence in Denver, neither having the remotest idea they were both on the same errand.

While Freeman was in Leadville, Meek was getting acquainted with the habits of the Albany, and had not been there many days before he had found out all that could be of advantage to him concerning Harvey, besides playing a game of billiards with him and purposely losing the same, in consequence of which Harvey promised to give him his revenge at another time.

From what Meek saw and heard about Harvey, it influenced him in making up his mind that he alone was not the man to do anything with him. He saw at once that Harvey looked upon him as an invalid, and believed that it would take a nature bold and decided to make any headway with him—that is, providing Harvey took kindly to the party.

After pondering for a week he decided to change his original tactics. The scheme that he now planned was characteristic of the man. It was not one where there could be any possibility of having to resort to any bold or physical mode of procedure; what was required to carry it through was "tact," and this was Meek's strong forte. In fact, it was his stock in trade; it was part and parcel of his whole being, and through



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it he had, on many occasions, beaten his more aggressive brothers.

Each time Harvey called at the hotel, Meek watched him as a cat watches a mouse-hole.

Harvey was a bachelor, a robust man, with strong passions. Most of his life had been spent in and around mining towns. He had never come in contact with the better or more aristocratic class of society. At the present time he was possessed of considerable money, and, since he began to make the Albany his headquarters when in Denver, had given particular attention to the dress and manner of the male habitués of the place. He assumed their manners and copied the cut of their clothes, and in time began to take on a more polished appearance.

The stylish, well dressed women that Harvey passed at times, in going to the billiard room, created in him a kind of awe, and some of the younger ladies he looked upon almost as angels.

These ladies were so different from the class he had usually met in the mining towns that they completely nonplussed him. They seemed to him to be made of different clay.

Meek, the astute judge of human nature, had noticed all this, and it now decided him how to act in his endeavor to procure the information about the mine. The undoing of Harvey was to be brought about through a woman; all men were rogues and scoundrels in his eyes. He had yet to be fooled by a fair siren.

Going to his room, he pondered:

"Yes, the very thing. I'll write at once. An up-to-date, brainy, well dressed woman will be able to fool

Harvey as the cleverest men have been fooled since time immemorial."

Touching the annunciator, the bell boy appeared.

"Bring me some stationery," said Meek, and settling himself back in his chair, commenced to think over the plan he had formed.

As he sat in his chair he took from his pocket a letter he had received from a lady in Chicago, and as it will shed a little light on the plot, we had better read it as he holds it in his hand:

Chicago, Ill., 19—

Mr. James Meek,

Albany Hotel, Denver, Colorado.

My Dear Mr. Meek:

Your letter received this A. M., and you can see by the date I have lost no time in answering it.

Now, James, I will tell you how we are "fixed," as you would say. To begin with, we have the coziest little flat that it is possible to have, and at the present time I am my old self, as natural, or as nearly so, as an artificial state of society will allow me to be.

You state that the first chance you have you will pay me a visit; I won't attempt to describe to you my feelings at the thought of seeing you again.

Your letter, James, has brought me back to my girlhood days, and now I am going to say "if"—ah! you see that little word means so much—well, "if" it hadn't been for that foolish quarrel years ago, how different our lives might have been. I can see now that it was all my fault, and in an insane fit of jealousy I gave up the kindest and most noble of men. Ah! James, if you only knew the remorse I have suffered



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since that fatal moment of madness—I thought when I rushed off and married Malcom that I would break your heart; but time has humbled me, and I am not ashamed to confess that instead of breaking your heart, it was my own that suffered. At that time I was young, foolish, and headstrong, and overcome with jealousy at seeing you at the ball with my rival—not waiting or caring for the explanation which you then offered. I paid the penalty, as I suppose others have done before and since.

I find, James, that instead of answering your letter I am wandering into paths of by-gone days. You ask me how we are getting along,—well, our allowance is enough to live on nicely, if it wasn't for the splurge Madge is making in the matrimonial market. She must have new dresses, and this constant drain keeps us pecuniarily embarrassed.

If this was Madge's first venture, I, as her mother, would have nothing to say; but you know only too well how she and that husband of hers dragged us all down, and the suffering she underwent before she procured her divorce. The fact that she has been married and obtained a divorce does not seem to stand in the way of her marrying again. But there is one thing she has evidently set her mind on, and that is her next husband—how it sounds—the *next*—must have money. Both you and I know that her first marriage was a pure love affair. She was very young then—seventeen—and procured her divorce at twenty-three. She has had her eyes opened very, very much since then. She is now twenty-five, and talks like a woman of forty. I can do nothing with her. The other night when I tried to give her a little advice, she re-

plied by telling me that she "knew her little book." I know she will marry again, and I pray to God every night that He will send her a good, kind husband.

You state that you are in Denver for your health. How I do hope that the mountain air will continue to improve it, and that when you have fully recovered you will not go back to New York without paying me a visit. In the meantime allow me to subscribe myself,

Yours as ever,

MRS. GRACE MALCOM.

As Meek read the letter, recalling as it did the memories of a past decade, he smiled grimly, which changed to cynicism as he thought of the time when the same handwriting thrilled and caused his heart to beat faster.

"Just like a woman," he mused as he laid the letter down. "She carries romance with her to the grave. She can call on it, no matter how old she may be, and it responds to the tender passion. She refers to the milk and lemonade period of my existence. However, in answering her letter, I will try to ape the lover, but will first fortify myself with a little brandy to falsify my heart, to rekindle a faint spark of the holy flame, which for the time being will enable me to play the part. Let her read between the lines if she can."

Albany Hotel, Denver, Colorado, 19—.

Mrs. Grace Malcom,

Chicago, Ill.

My Dear Old Love:

Your letter, just received, has caused me both joy and pain—joy to hear from you—pain when I think of what might have been. I feel too delighted to ex-



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press myself by cold words on paper, as they cannot possibly tell the warmth of my heart. If you can't grant me any greater favor, won't you promise me to keep up the correspondence?

I am now going to ask a great favor of you, Mrs. Malcom, which I hope you will grant. I am very lonesome here, and if you could spare Madge to pay me a visit, I am sure the trip would do her good. I would dearly love to have you accompany her, but I know from past experience that you always objected to traveling. Do try and come with her. You can lock up your flat for a month, and I am sure you would be ever so much better for a short stay in this delightful climate.

You say that Madge is bent on marrying again; then by all means, let her marry a rich man. To be candid with you, Mrs. Malcom, that is one of the reasons I wish her to come here; and as she always called me uncle, I am sure that considering I am old enough to be her father, gossips could not find anything to shock their fine susceptibilities. Do think this over seriously, my dear Mrs. Malcom, and let me know your decision as soon as possible.

Your ever constant,

JAMES.

P. S.—I am writing a few lines to Madge asking her to consult with you about my invitation.

"Bah!—it is finished—what a blessing it is the scientists haven't discovered a way to read our hearts—now for the daughter."

Albany Hotel, Denver, Colorado, 19—.

Miss Madge Malcom,
Chicago, Ill.

My Dear Madge:

I have sent an invitation to you and your mother to spend a few weeks in this delightful climate. Your mother has told me all about your past troubles, and I can assure you I am truly thankful you have seen the last of that odious creature. If you should ever think of marrying again, you must, my dear, marry a rich man, and I know of no place where your prospects would be so good as this. There are quite a number of millionaires staying here, and a dearth of eligible young ladies.

Should you decide to come, you must excuse an old friend of the family for mentioning your wardrobe; for as you would be staying here in the hotel with me, I should take pride in having you the best dressed young lady coming into the dining room. You would not require many street costumes. You must not be offended at your uncle, for such you always called me—at enclosing a draft, as I know young ladies require so many things to fit them for a journey. I have not told your mother of the draft, but you can explain it to her. I believe if you come at once your chances are good for capturing a bachelor, millionaire mine owner.

Should you and your mother decide to come, telegraph as soon as you make up your minds. In the meantime allow me sign myself,

Your affectionate uncle,

JAMES MEEK.

When Madge received this letter from Meek, she exclaimed:

"At last my time has come! This is what I have lain awake dreaming about for the past two years.



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I've always had the impression that given a smart girl with a good education, providing she were prepossessing and had a good wardrobe to set off her personal charms,—then the right parties to introduce her to the men of means,—the part of capturing one for a husband then depended upon the ability of the girl. I've got what I've been craving for—the chance to meet these men; and if I don't hook one of them, then my name is not Madge Malcom. Uncle Meek, you're a brick, and I'll never forget you."

Madge again took up the letter and the draft, exclaiming:

"Mother, what are you going to do about it? I mean, are you going to accept Mr. Meek's invitation?"

"My dear child, do give me time to compose myself. My nerves are all unstrung at hearing from dear James, recalling, as it does, memories of the past—ah, if I could have read the future!"

"Mother, when you awake from your dream I should like you to answer my question."

"Oh, child! child! Have you no feeling?"

"Mother, I've had too much feeling, as you call it. You had no pity for me when my heart was breaking, and now when you receive a letter from an old beau, you, at your age, talk of pity. I'm ashamed of you; I am, mother, really."

Mrs. Malcom, paying no attention to what her daughter was saying, arose and walked toward the mantel. Taking up an old photograph of Meek's from its resting place, she resumed her seat by the window, and commenced to rock violently. As Mrs. Malcom's excitement abated, so did the momentum of the rocking chair, until it finally ceased. Still gazing on the

photograph, she exclaimed :

"I wonder how he looks to-day? James Meek was one of the handsomest young men that ever lived. Oh, but I would dearly love to see him."

"Mother, if you've regained your senses, I'd like very much to know when I'm to get an answer to my question. If you're going to 'moon' all night, I'm not going to wait, but will answer Mr. Meek's letter at once and tell him I accept his invitation."

"Madge Malcom, if there's any letter writing to be done in reference to James Meek, I wish you to understand that I'll attend to it."

"Don't get jealous, mother ; I'm not going to set my cap for this old flame of yours."

"Madge Malcom" (Mrs. Malcom always gave Madge her surname whenever she assumed a dignified manner and wished to admonish her), "this is disgraceful—it is scandalous, and I won't allow a daughter of mine to talk to me in such a manner. You're getting so cold, so calculating and heartless, that I'm afraid you'll bring disgrace upon my gray hairs."

"When I was in 'Poverty Hollow' with that late husband of mine you said the same thing. Don't be afraid, mother. Instead of bringing disgrace to your gray hairs, the time will come when you'll be gadding around drinking tea with your neighbors, and at such parties will be very anxious to explain to them that Mrs. So-and-so is your daughter. I'll be rich yet, mother, and before long, I hope ; and if at the present time I appear mercenary, I consider I've been driven to it."

"Why can't you be sensible, Madge, and make up your mind to settle down and stay with your mother?



I'm sure we could be perfectly happy if you would only make up your mind to remain single."

"You don't practice what you preach, mother. Here you are, at your age, 'mooning' worse than a school girl about an old beau who has written you a letter; and if Mr. Meek should come to Chicago, I'm afraid I would have to leave the house to avoid witnessing the billing and cooing that I've not the least doubt would take place. Yes, mother, I'm afraid if Mr. Meek should pop the question, you would jump at him like a bird at a fly—then what would become of your poor daughter?"

After Madge had ceased talking, she opened her writing desk, and dating a letter, said:

"Mother, what do you wish me to say to Mr. Meek?"

"Madge! Madge!" exclaimed her mother, "why are you so arbitrary? Can't you wait until I have recovered from the shock to my nerves?"

"Mother, I'm going to write to Mr. Meek at once, and after you have composed yourself you can write him a letter and tell him what you think best. Understand, I'm going to Denver as soon as I can get my things ready."

"Oh, my! Oh, my! That I ever reared a child to talk to me like this." Madge went on writing her letter, and when she had finished it, said:

"I'm going to the bank, mother, to cash this draft—Briggs is the cashier, so I'll not need any one to identify me. I may not be back for an hour or two, as upon leaving the bank I shall go to one of the stores to choose the material for my gowns. I think I know what Mr. Meek meant when he said I would have to

make a good appearance around the hotel; so good-bye, mother—take Mr. Meek's photograph and try to compose yourself."

Madge got as far the front door, when she turned abruptly, and going to her mother, put her arms around her neck, saying:

— "Cheer up, mother; if I capture one of the millionaires rest assured you'll be well taken care of. Have the kettle boiling by the time I get back, as I shall bring home something nice for lunch. Ta-ta."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MRS. MALCOM, left alone with her thoughts, mused and pondered on Meek's delightful letter, and this letter from such a delightful man, and that man an old lover of hers, and the most delightful part of all, the gentleman was still a bachelor; and ah—from the tone of the letter and the invitation to spend a few weeks in such a delightful climate—what did it all mean? What did it portend? He had not forgotten her. He was true to her still. There was only one conception to form—he was lonely, and who could comfort him like the girl he loved in his youth? Mrs. Malcom could endure the solitude no longer. She must unburden herself to some one. Opening the door which led into the hall, she rang the bell of her neighbor, Mrs. Brown.

Mrs. Brown was what they called a neighborly woman. She was so neighborly that she knew the life history of every family in the flat. When any one called at the Brown residence, he was invariably told that she was in Mrs. Jones'; on applying he was informed that she had just left, but you might find her in Mrs. Smith's; from Mrs. Smith's you were told to knock at Mrs. So-and-so's, or any flat in the building but her own. She had recipes for any and every ailment. She could cure rheumatism or gout, and had an infallible remedy for bald heads, which she said beat all the hair restorers on the market. Hadn't she cured Brown when all the doctors in Chicago had given him up? And when any of the neighbors' children had the

measles, did they send for the doctor? No; it was Mrs. Brown. But how about Mr. Brown? Poor Brown—well, out of respect for the Browns who may read this book, we refrain from saying anything further.

When Mrs. Brown entered Mrs. Malcom's apartments, she began to inform Mrs. Malcom of the choice tid-bits in the line of gossip about her neighbors. Poor Mrs. Malcom was standing with Meek's photograph in one hand, while in the other she held his letter, waiting in agony for Mrs. Brown to cease speaking so that she might unburden herself.

From sheer exhaustion Mrs. Brown at last ceased speaking, and Mrs. Malcom, fearful lest Mrs. Brown should begin on another topic, thrust Meek's letter into her hand, and with joy at once began to relieve her pent up feeling, saying:

"Read it, Mrs. Brown," at the same time handing her Meek's photograph.

Meek's photograph, which had been taken thirty years ago, at the present time was very much faded; and from the change of fashion in the clothes, was anything but a representative photograph of Meek at the present time.

"What a lovely gentleman, Mrs. Malcom," and as she read Meek's letter, stopped at every period. "Fie, this is an old beau of yours—ah, he wants you to go to Denver—how sly of you not to tell me of this—you're going, surely—still water, Mrs. Malcom, they say, runs deep."

"Ah, Mrs. Brown, if you only knew him."

"Come, Mrs. Malcom, tell me—I'm dying to know, are you going to accept him?"



"I know I ought to fly to him, Mrs. Brown— but I haven't met him for such a long time that I'm afraid I've changed a great deal, and should feel dreadful if I looked too old in James' eyes."

"Why, Mrs. Malcom, comparatively speaking, you're a young woman. I was saying only the other day to Mr. Brown, that it did not seem possible for Madge to be your daughter. If you did not tell me, I would not have taken you to be a day over thirty-eight."

Mrs. Malcom had been fishing for just such a compliment, and Mrs. Brown, who could flatter without ever blushing, paid her the full measure.

While they were talking, the bell rang.

"Here's Madge; don't breathe a word of what I have told you to any one, Mrs. Brown—mind—not a word."

"You can trust me, Mrs. Malcom; a team of horses couldn't drag it out of me," said Mrs. Brown as she made her exit from the Malcom residence, and entered the apartment of another tenant, where Mrs. Malcom was promptly ridiculed, roasted and done to a turn by her late confidant.

"Well, mother," exclaimed Madge, as the door closed on Mrs. Brown, "still mooning about your darling James?"

"Oh, Madge, if you only knew him, I'm sure you would not blame your mother if she did act a little foolish at receiving tidings from her old lover."

"The same old story. All mothers think their daughters foolish, but when they act just as foolish, they want their daughters to understand that it is quite different. You had better pack your trunk and come along with me to Denver; you know I'll want a chaperon, as Mrs. Grundy would surely comment on a

little innocent like me being without one. Understand, mother, I'm going as soon as the dressmaker finishes the dreams I have chosen."

"Madge, you'll explain to James how his letter affected me, and tell him that I'll know of no happiness until I see his dear face again; also, dwell upon our lovely flat, and how cozy I could make it for him. You know, Madge, how lonesome it will be for me if you should marry again."

"Mother, you have an ambassador in me who will carry out your mission to the very letter. You are also possibly aware that I am getting to simulate very nicely, and as I have been studying the 'Immortal William,' I'll try and catch my breath in the middle of the words when describing your emotions at receiving his letter. Yes, mother, if it depends on the ambassador, rest contented, you'll surely be Mrs. Meek in a very short time."

"Madge! Madge!" exclaimed her mother, "How dreadful you are; I never thought of such a thing."

"It's all right, mother, a wink is as good as a nod to a blind horse."

Mrs. Malcom had been seated at her desk all morning writing and re-writing a letter to Mr. Meek, and between times explaining to Madge what she wished her to tell him; Madge, however, continued her preparations for departure, paying little or no attention to what her mother was saying. At last everything being ready, and the cab at the door, Madge, after one or two fervent hugs from her mother, entered it and was driven to the depot.



CHAPTER XXXV.

WHILE playing billiards with Harvey, Meek incidentally mentioned the fact that his niece was coming to Denver to keep him company. Harvey thought to himself that if she were not stronger physically than Meek, she would be a fit subject for a hospital. He had always been used to the company of strong, robust men, and treated sick people as children.

The next day Madge was due to arrive.

Closely scanning the passengers as they emerged from the cars, Meek saw a stylish young lady smiling as she came rapidly towards him. When she got nearer, he recognized her, and before he had time to get over his surprise at her superb appearance, Madge bounded into his arms, saying:

"Don't you know me, uncle?" at the same time kissing the astonished Meek in a manner that told him she was just the woman to land Harvey in the net he had prepared for him.

Calling a cab, they proceeded to the Albany Hotel.

After Madge had been shown to her room and changed her traveling dress, she made her appearance before Uncle James.

"Well, Madge," said Meek, as she entered his room, "you don't appear the least distressed after such a long journey."

"No, indeed, uncle, I am not in the least tired, and feel just like taking a long walk."

"You'd better rest to-night, and to-morrow after

breakfast we'll take a drive around the city; and when we return, we'll discuss plans for your future happiness."

"I suppose, Madge, you've no objection to becoming rich?"

"Uncle James, I may appear mercenary in your eyes; but after all I've been through, I'm determined never to rest content until I have enough money to command respect."

"And envy?" queried Meek as he smiled on her.

"I should like to make a European trip," continued Madge, "and see all those places I have read so much about. It is galling to me to sit and listen to a party of ladies discussing the various places of interest they have visited in their European travels. I have also some debts I wish to pay, and they are not pecuniary ones. No, they are debts of ingratitude and scorn. I realized after I was married a short time that I had made the mistake of my life; then I dropped all acquaintances and was willing to submit to the inevitable.

"As the majority of my school-girl friends married men of means, it seemed the first person they wanted to taunt with their riches was Madge. I congratulated them on their catch, and suffered in silence. I moved four times in one year to be relieved of their visits; but they always managed to find my address. I did not mind my poverty so much, had I been let alone; but when I heard that their favorite way of discussing me was in such expressions as: 'Poor Madge! What a terrible mistake she made; I'm afraid she's actually starving; I think we ought to form a committee and take up a subscription so that she'll be kept from want'



—that, my dear uncle, more than anything else, decided me in allowing my parents to procure for me a divorce. The Bible teaches us we are all brothers and sisters—well, I’ve nothing to say about the brother part of it, but heaven save me from my sisters.

“If that committee they talked about forming had ever come to my door, I can assure you, uncle, they’d have gone away flying. Now do you understand why I covet riches? I long for the day to come when I can drive around and send in my card—this may be silly to you, uncle, but understand I’m a woman, and we have our way of ‘getting even’.”

“Well, Madge, this is the scheme: The manager of the mine in which my friends and I have invested, is a frequenter of this hotel. I am acquainted so far as to play an occasional game of billiards with him. Should he ever ask you in what business I am engaged, give him to understand that you think I have retired from all active business.”

“I’ll obey you to the letter, uncle.”

“If you do, Madge, I’ll make money for both of us, and plenty of it; then you and your mother can take a trip to Europe; while there you can pick up some likely young fellow with a title, and come back to the States as Countess—well, we’ll put the name in later.”

“Much obliged, uncle, for all the grand prospects you have mapped out for me, but leave the countess part out of it; an American is good enough for me. Get me the money without the man; but if I’ve got to take the man, I’ll take him like I take the religion the parson preaches, and ask no questions.”

“You understand, Madge, the whole thing rests on you making an impression on this man, Harvey; if

you can win his confidence, and he becomes infatuated with you—well, you're a woman, and from what you've been through I need say no more. When he is in that certain condition and wants to do everything and anything to satisfy your slightest whim, then we'll spring the plot to secure the information, which will be a very easy affair after you have ensnared him in the meshes of your net. I'll leave it to you, Madge, when you think the fruit is ripe for plucking."

"Do you think he is at all inclined to be captivated by any of my sex?"

"Madge, I'm surprised that you should ask such a question; let me tell you that the man doesn't live that is proof against them; that is, if he has his health."

"Well, uncle, all that I hope is that I may be able to fulfill the high opinion you have of my ability, and, like the old gladiators, am eagerly waiting for the combat to begin."



CHAPTER XXXVI.

IS SHE a new arrival?

"Yes," said the clerk of the hotel.

"Who might she be?"

"The gentleman, Mr. Harvey, with whom you were playing billiards the other evening, is her uncle; she is here to keep him company."

"Well, he needs some one to look after him; I guess the poor fellow isn't very strong; he said he expected his niece, but I had no idea she would be anything like she is; I never saw such a beautiful woman in my life."

"Get him to give you an introduction to her."

"There's no danger of him doing that; those old chaps never give us mining fellows introductions to their nieces or daughters; they're reserved for the dudes."

"I think you're wrong there, Mr. Harvey; a miner who has the money can get any of them."

"Well, I'll bet you the cigars on it, and if I get an introduction you can have a box of the best in the hotel."

"I'll take the bet, Mr. Harvey."

As Harvey was walking through the corridor of the hotel, whom should he meet but Meek.

"Good evening, Mr. Harvey."

"Good evening, Mr. Meek. When may I have the pleasure of another game? Don't you want your revenge?"

"We have just time for one before dinner, and I'm not sure whether I can play with you after or not, as

my niece has arrived and she might be lonesome without my company."

Meek toyed with Harvey during the game, purposely losing, although at times his playing was brilliant, he seeming to try how close he could play without scoring—Harvey continually saying, "Hard luck, Mr. Meek."

After the game, Meek went directly to Madge's room, and closing the door, said:

"He's arrived."

"Good!" answered Madge. "What dress do you think I look best in?"

"Well, you looked stunning last night; I think I'd try that on him to-night."

When Meek and Madge were making their exit from the elevator, they met Harvey, who was on his way to the dining room.

Meek, who appeared to see everything at the right time, as he was invariably cool, seized the opportunity to introduce Madge. Harvey was noticeably embarrassed at the introduction, and to Mr. Meek's inquiry as to whether he was about to dine, answered in the affirmative.

"Then I wish you would honor us with your company at dinner, Mr. Harvey."

Harvey replied by saying it would give him the greatest pleasure, but was afraid he was not up to date in ladies' society, as he was nothing more than a rough miner.

"Mr. Harvey, I consider you a gentleman, otherwise I would never have asked you to join us."

"Well, I'm sure you're very kind, Mr. Meek," replied Harvey.

As they sat down to dinner Harvey looked upon Madge with ill-concealed admiration.

Madge, dressed in a superb evening costume, seemed almost to hypnotize Harvey each time she spoke to him. This was something new for him, to be dining, as he supposed, with the aristocrats. This, with the attention that Madge was paying him, had the effect of producing the most profound respect for Meek, and adoration for her. Harvey was in that state peculiar to persons who are suddenly thrust into unfamiliar society, and between trying to take part in the conversation, and the attention he was attracting from the other guests, his embarrassment increased. Each time the waiter gained permission from Madge and her uncle to remove the plates for the next course, Harvey did likewise, although he had scarcely partaken of the food. Madge, noticing this when the dinner was half over, dallied with each course until she saw that Harvey was ready for the waiter to remove his plate.

Through Madge's tact, Harvey was enabled while she addressed her conversation to her uncle, to keep up with each course, and as everything comes to an end, so this dinner passed into history.

When they arose from the table, Madge took her uncle's arm, at the same time holding an animated conversation with Harvey, as they walked towards the elevator.

As they waited for the elevator to descend, Harvey said:

"Do you wish to play to-night, Mr. Meek?"

"I certainly do, Mr. Harvey, that is, if my niece has no objections to remaining alone."

"Mr. Harvey, pray don't mind uncle; he is just dying

to play with you, and knows I have no objection."

"It's very kind of you, I'm sure, Miss Malcom."

"If you're not in any great hurry, Mr. Harvey, I'd like you to come to my quarters and smoke a cigar before we commence play, as I must take my medicine directly after meals. Have you any appointment for this evening?"

"None whatever, Mr. Meek, thank you."

As Meek commenced to prepare his medicine, Madge entered the room.

"Ah, uncle, if you only had some of Mr. Harvey's strength, you wouldn't have to take any medicine."

"You're right there, Madge, I almost envy Mr. Harvey. Couldn't you sell me some, Mr. Harvey?"

Harvey smiled.

"Mr. Harvey," said Madge, innocently, "is it very dangerous work in your coal mines?"

At this sally of Madge's both Harvey and Meek laughed audibly, and this supposed error made Harvey feel less uncomfortable than he had been since he entered the room.

"What is the cause of this mirth?" asked Madge, as she gazed at both gentlemen with a beaming smile.

"My dear, you have made a great blunder; Mr. Harvey is digging for gold, not coal."

"My! Mr. Harvey, it don't seem possible that I am in the presence of a gentleman who can sit down and watch his men dig gold with pick-axe and spade, while to others the possession of ever so little is hoarded and guarded so carefully. I should dearly love to see the miners at work procuring the precious metal, as perhaps after feasting my eyes on so much wealth it might have a tendency to lessen the great desire I have at

times to possess it—seeing it treated in such a common manner—also ever afterwards, should my friends discuss gold, I could tell them that that which they were all fighting to possess I had seen taken out of the ground with pick and spade.”

“Well, Miss Malcom, if you and your uncle will favor me with a visit to Black Hawk, I shall be pleased to show you through the mine, as I feel sure some of the new veins we have opened lately would surprise you.”

“I should be delighted, Mr. Harvey.”

“Madge!” exclaimed her uncle, “you must not really entertain any such ideas. I can’t imagine you suggesting such a thing—a young lady going down a mine where all kinds of accidents occur—are you not afraid?”

“Afraid, uncle! What danger could there be with Mr. Harvey as our guide?”

“Madge, I shall never give my consent to such a journey, and I don’t understand your suggesting such a thing to Mr. Harvey. Suppose some of the rocks should fall on you—what would your mother think of me for allowing you to go?”

“Mr. Meek, should you and your niece decide to pay me a visit, I’ll guarantee you’ll be as safe in my care as you are in this room at the present time.”

“You’re very kind, Mr. Harvey, but I never could think of accepting your invitation.”

“I can only hope, Mr. Meek, that you’ll change your mind, and that you and your niece will honor me with a visit.”

“Oh, I think uncle will come, Mr. Harvey; won’t you uncle?”

"Madge, please don't annoy me by asking such a thing. I would not think of going down such a dark, damp place for the world."

"I'm sorry you think it is so dangerous, uncle, as it would be so romantic to write and tell my friends that I've seen them digging the precious metal."

"Don't get discouraged, Miss Malcom, as I think I can persuade your uncle to come."

"Do so, Mr. Harvey, and you'll have my everlasting good will."

"Now, Mr. Harvey, if you're ready, I'll try and turn the tables on you to-night—I want to wipe out my defeat."

"I don't wish you to leave your niece on my account, Mr. Meek."

"I've got my books here, Mr. Harvey, and I beg of you gentlemen not to defer your game on my account."

"Well, if Mr. Meek insists, I'll say good-bye, Miss Malcom."

"Good-bye, Mr. Harvey, and be sure you call on us when you come to the city again."

"I should like to keep up the acquaintance if I thought I wasn't intruding."

"No intrusion, I can assure you, Mr. Harvey," replied Meek; "I am bored to death with the average city man, as the conversation is invariably business, business, and schemes of all kinds to make money. I came here for my health, and don't wish to even think of business, and it's a treat to meet a man like you—so natural, and if I hear you're in the city and don't call to see us I shall be very angry."

"Then I'll never make you angry, Mr. Meek."

Once more bidding Madge good-night, Meek and



Harvey made their way to the billiard room.

As the game proceeded, Meek saw that he could not play 'possum without being discovered, for play as he would, Harvey dropped woefully behind in the game.

"You're not playing as good a game as you did the other evening, Mr. Harvey."

"I don't know what's the matter with my billiard — playing to-night, as I seem to slip up on the easiest of shots."

"Perhaps it's the cue; try another, Mr. Harvey."

"I guess I will," answered Harvey.

It was not the difference in the cues that prevented Harvey from playing his usual strong game, and no one knew this better than Meek. He was very much amused at Harvey, student of human nature that he was, and could read him as plainly as if Harvey had confessed to him the effect that Madge had produced on him.

Meek prolonged the game until for appearance sake he had to run it out, as Harvey could not make a shot.

"Try another," said Meek.

"No, not to-night, thank you, Mr. Meek."

"When do we play again, Mr. Harvey?"

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Mr. Meek; I'll come down early on Monday, then we can play as many games as you wish, as it's very evident that I cannot play a good game to-night; and as I hate to play when not in form, we had better let it go until then."

"Well, I shall hold you to your promise, as I would sooner play with you than any one I've met around the hotel."

Shaking hands with Harvey, Meek wished him good-night.



CHAPTER XXXVII.

AFTER leaving Meek, Harvey retired to his room and began pacing to and fro, whistling a popular air—then pausing, he exclaimed :

“She’s a stunner, a regular fairy !”

Touching the electric button, a bell-boy appeared in response.

Ordering a bottle of beer, and cigars, he continued musing :

“By thunder !” he exclaimed, “She’s a peach ! Not a bit proud—talked to me the same as if I was the real thing, a regular out-and-out swell ; I wonder—oh, d——n it, no, it could not be possible—Harvey, old boy, you’re getting foolish—yet, I’ve read of such things where they have taken a fancy to such men as I. I’d sooner have her than all the money we’ll make out of the scheme. She’s the sweetest little thing that ever came my way. How the boys’ eyes would bulge out if they saw me and the old boy’s niece walking out together.”

Harvey sat in one of those delightful reveries that so many of us have passed through. Everything was propitious to make it perfect. He was alone in his room, and the beer he had consumed, together with the cigar he was smoking, gently exhilarated him as he sat blowing rings of smoke, watching them as they slowly ascended towards the ceiling. Taking the cigar out of his mouth, he mused :

“I’ve taken out, in my time, some of the richest ore that ever saw the light of day, and have located some of the best paying claims ; but with all the delight I felt at such times, I never experienced anything that gave me such pleasure as this girl, and if old boy Har-

vey could—but what's the use of talking? She'd have nothing to do with a rough old bachelor who knows nothing but mining. I felt like a fool in the dining room with all those swells staring at us. Well, every man has his place, and I know mine is not in a room with a lot of society ducks."

Harvey was completely,—nay, desperately in love with Madge. He had capitulated before a shot was fired; or, as the fishermen say, "had swallowed hook, line, bait and sinker."

Here was a man whose confidence the sharpest men in Denver had found it impossible to gain. He would have none of them. Time and again he had been tried by the shrewdest; but was proof against their wiles. He knew that all they wanted was to cajole from him the secrets of the mine.

Harvey has lost none of his cunning; he is still the same shrewd, taciturn fellow with men; but in Madge he has met a foe before whom the greatest of men have fallen—yes, emperors, kings, statesmen, and the wisest philosophers, have been beguiled, dragged in the dust, and made pygmies by the fair siren.

A woman cannot very well go to the front, and with fist, club or gun, demand her rights—in consequence she has studied simulation, until with her it has become an art. With a smile that is childlike in its simplicity, as with a well-feigned timidity she holds tightly to your arm, she throws herself, as it were, on your manly nature, while you, poor mortal, feeling this timid dove nestling under your wing, tingle all over with suppressed excitement as you glance around with the air of the gladiator: "Touch the hem of her garment and you perish."



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MEEEK had almost accomplished the mission he had been sent to execute. He had not as yet the information, but it was within his grasp. After turning everything over in his mind, he decided that the best thing to do under the circumstances would be to write to Todd, and tell him that if he would send on a practical mining expert, he would guarantee him all the inside facts of the mine within forty-eight hours after the man's arrival in Denver.

When Todd received Meek's letter, he began to search for old Dave Morris, the mining expert. This man, Morris, had had charge of gold mines for the best part of his life, and if he had not been given to speculation would have had enough of this world's goods to have kept him for the remainder of his years.

"Hello, Morris, I've been looking for you all afternoon. Where've you been?"

"Come and take dinner with me; I want to talk to you about a little business proposition that I have on hand."

"Is there any money in it?" queried Morris.

"Yes, and a pleasant journey besides."

Next day Todd and Morris were closeted all the forenoon in Todd's private office. At four o'clock the door opened—

"Well, good-bye, Morris—a still tongue and a watchful eye, and between you and Meek you'll find out everything."



CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE same night Morris left New York for Denver, Meek received a dispatch from Todd, stating that he had sent him a man, an expert in mining, and one that Meek could depend on in everything that he asked him to do.

Early on the morning of the third day after Meek received the dispatch from Todd, the bell-boy brought him a card which bore the name of Mr. David Morris, New York.

"Show the gentleman to my room," said Meek.

Meek left the door open, and as soon as the boy appeared with Morris, gave him a hearty welcome.

"I suppose you feel tired, Mr. Morris, after your long journey?"

"Well, there was a time, Mr. Meek, when I did not know what it was to feel tired, but I am getting along in years, and find that I can't stand the pressure like I used to when I was considerably younger."

"I guess it's the same with us all," replied Meek.

While Meek and Morris were conversing, and getting better acquainted, Madge entered the room.

"Let me introduce you to my niece, Mr. Morris."

When Harvey arrived at Meek's room on the following Monday, he found Meek alone, Madge having taken the cue to retire and put on one of her most captivating dresses. Pressing a glass of wine on Harvey, Meek broke the ice about his visitor, Morris. Harvey was a little annoyed at the news, thinking it might interfere with ideas he had formed of having a chat with Madge.

While these thoughts were coursing through the

brain of Harvey, Morris appeared in the doorway. Seeing a stranger, he, with well feigned surprise, hung back as if undecided whether or not he was intruding, and was apparently about to retire when Meek said:

"Mr. Morris, don't go away, I wish to introduce you to my friend, Mr. Harvey."

"I'm glad to meet a friend of my old school fellow's. Mr. Meek and I attended the same school, Mr. Harvey, and many a time we had together, but for the past twenty years we haven't seen much of each other."

"Well, we drifted apart, Morris, like many others, but we might have met oftener if we had been a little more considerate toward each other."

"That's what I thought, James, when I received your letter stating that you and Madge were here, and made up my mind I would not put it off any longer, and am sorry that I can only stay a few days with you."

"Morris, you are getting like the rest of the cur-mudgeons and want to rush back to Indiana to grind out a few more dollars, and like myself you won't give up the ship until she's sinking beneath you; then possibly she'll be so heavily laden that when the storm strikes her, instead of jettisoning some of the cargo you'll want to save it all, and in doing so, down to the bottom you go."

"Well done, James,—what do you think of that, Mr. Harvey?"

"I think every word of it is true, Mr. Morris; but we are like the doctors—that is, we don't want to take any of our own medicine."

Meek having ordered cigars, they were about to get better acquainted in that way that reaches the hearts of most men of the world, when in walked Madge.

"Why, how do you do, Mr. Harvey?" exclaimed she. "How long have you been here? Uncle, why did you not tell me Mr. Harvey had arrived?"

"I've only been here about ten minutes, Miss Malcom."

"I'll forgive you, uncle, this time; but since the arrival of his old school chum, Mr. Harvey, he seems to forget everything else."

"There you are, Mr. Harvey, that's the woman of it, forever thinking she's being slighted."

Madge soon had Harvey answering a multiplicity of questions concerning mining, and the gallant Westerner swelled with conscious pride as he described the wonders of the mine.

"I haven't brought a dress suit with me, Mr. Harvey, so I hope you'll excuse me dining in my present costume."

"I can assure you, Mr. Morris, that dress suits cut very little figure with me, and I owe it to the acquaintance of Mr. Meek, or otherwise I would never have thought of purchasing one, but I always like to appear the same as others."

The truth was that Harvey had branched out since he first dined with Madge and her uncle.

During the dinner of this well matched quartette, each was playing a part. Meek and Morris held an animated conversation that was almost personal. Madge, appearing suddenly to notice the personality of their conversation, told Harvey that she guessed they were talking over their school boy secrets, and with a well turned inuendo at the expense of the old gentlemen, gave herself up entirely to Harvey during the dinner. This program had all been arranged before dinner,—Harvey was in good hands.



CHAPTER XL.

THE bright lights of the dining room; the merry prattle of the guests; the sly glances from the diners to see the gentleman who held such an animated conversation with such a pretty woman—all had its effect on Harvey. Madge certainly appeared to the best advantage. Her costume could not be excelled; while her pink and white skin, set off by the sparkle of fire that flashed from her eyes, alternately lighting up her countenance as darts of sunburst breaking through soft, fleecy clouds, to be replaced by a soft, subdued glow, as she listened to the wondrous mining tales of Harvey; and as he finished each sentence, so did the sun of her eyes shine forth; its radiance reflecting itself on his countenance, as she told him she didn't understand how he had ever escaped being killed.

Madge was no mean actress, and if Meek's scheme fell through, it would not be on her account.

After dinner, as they were emerging from the dining room, Meek proposed to Harvey a game of billiards. As he did so, Madge interrupted Harvey's reply, saying:

"Uncle, you know what you promised me."

"Madge, dear, I don't feel like going out to-night, really I don't. Can't you put it off until to-morrow morning? Then we'll take a good long walk, and in the afternoon I'll take you for a drive."

"Uncle, dear, I feel that I must get some fresh air; I don't want to go far or stay out long, a short walk for half an hour will do. I am sure Mr. Harvey and Mr. Morris will wait until we return, then you can play



as long as you like."

"Madge, I really can't go out in the night air. Perhaps Mr. Harvey will be kind enough to take you for a short walk, and Mr. Morris and I will wait until your return before we commence to play."

Harvey looked with astonishment at Meek's suggestion, as he had never anticipated such unexpected pleasure, and of course was delighted at the prospect of escorting Madge for a walk.

"If Miss Malcom will accept me as her escort," replied Harvey, "I shall deem it a great honor to accompany her."

"I don't wish to take Mr. Harvey away from his game of billiards, as I know gentlemen would sooner play than go promenading with ladies; but if Mr. Harvey will be so kind, I'll promise I won't keep him away from his game very long."

Harvey, who was perfectly honest with Madge, told her he much preferred going out with her than to play a dozen games of billiards.

As they proceeded on their walk he would gaze on her in the most benign manner, never speaking a word. Then again he would lower his head as if about to say something, and when Madge was all attention, would suddenly raise it without speaking.

Madge noticing this embarrassment on Harvey's part, began to ask him questions about the mine, a subject that she well knew would be the means of making him feel more comfortable.

"Are you never afraid of being killed in the mine when you are firing off those blasts that you spoke of the other evening?"

"There's very little danger after you get used to the work, Miss Malcom."

As they were passing a confectioner's store, Harvey insisted that Madge should enter with him.

"Now, Miss Malcom, won't you oblige me by ordering what candy you like best?"

Leaning with just the faintest of pressure, as her arm encircled his, making the blood tingle in his veins, they sauntered back to the hotel.

Meek and Morris had not commenced their game of billiards, and as Harvey and Madge came through the ladies' entrance they arose and walked towards them.

"I'm ever so much obliged to you, I'm sure, Mr. Harvey. After you departed, Morris and I decided to wait your return—then we could play a three-handed game."

"Well, I'm sure it's very kind of you gentlemen," replied Harvey.

"Madge, can you find your way to your room, or shall I escort you there?"

"No, thanks; I can find it all right. See, uncle!" at the same time exhibiting the box of candy, "this is from Mr. Harvey."

"I'm afraid Mr. Harvey will spoil you, Madge; really, I am."

Harvey, Morris and Meek, having adjourned to the billiard room, were soon to all intents and purposes absorbed in the game.

Harvey's estimation of himself had greatly risen during the past week. Here he was hobnobbing with two rich retired gentlemen, and the niece of one was not too proud to pay attention to him. He dare not think that Madge was smitten with him; but then again, he would say to himself:

"She seems to think that I'm a brave sort of fellow,



and talks of my strength. Well, I've got a bit of money, and when we unload this stock, which will add considerable to my pile, I'll lay my hand and heart at her feet. If she refuses me, she'll still have my love and respect, and if she accepts me—but—Harvey, old boy, you're mooning again; there's as much chance of your marrying that girl as there is of your getting to heaven."

Harvey evidently thought that his chances of ever ascending to the celestial home were slim.

In blissful ignorance Harvey was being led on to do that which no man could ever have induced him to do. This scheme of Meek's was one that neither Harvey nor any one of the clique ever thought of, and Harvey was the last man in the world that Royal ever thought would become infatuated with a woman.

Meek was getting very anxious, now that the time for solving the secret of the mine was drawing near, and resolved as soon as the bubble was pricked, to pack Madge off to Chicago. He knew she could be depended upon to a certain extent to keep the secret; but he was also aware of the fact that she was a woman, and as such, should her vanity be wounded in any way, or should she imagine, as is more frequently the case, that she had been slighted, she would be a dangerous woman to have around. Her inborn vanity, like the majority of her sex, was so great, and her moods so changeable, that she would defy the very gods one minute, and the next offer herself up as a sacrifice for so doing.

Meek did not place any too much confidence in women, and would never have taken Madge into the scheme if it had been possible to manage it without her. It had cost him two nights of deep meditation

before he had decided to send for her.

When the game of billiards was over, Meek suggested that they retire to his room and partake of a glass of wine and smoke a cigar. Madge, who was as often in her uncle's room as her own, was there when they arrived.

"Hello, Madge! Not retired yet?"

"I've been reading, uncle; and as I did not feel sleepy, thought I would finish the story."

"I'm glad you didn't retire earlier, as I shall now not be annoyed by you rising too early in the morning."

"Good-night, Mr. Harvey; good-night, Mr. Morris; good night, uncle," exclaimed Madge, as she was about to make her exit from the room.

"Pray don't go, Miss Malcom; it's not very late, and I'm sure your uncle, Mr. Morris and I would enjoy your company."

"I don't know whether I ought to stay or not, Mr. Harvey; I remember papa always said that men never wanted any women around when they were taking their wine and smoking their cigars."

"Well, circumstances alter cases; we want you to stay and that makes all the difference in the world."

The little party was soon in a general conversation, during which Madge said:

"I'm afraid, Mr. Harvey, that I'll never be able to accept your kind invitation to visit the mine, as my uncle, and I know Mr. Morris is just like him, will never venture on such a journey."

"I'll try again; I think I can persuade either your uncle or Mr. Morris to accompany you."

"Pardon me, gentlemen, but I'd like your assistance in a little matter that I have on hand. Your niece, Mr. Meek, says that she will never give me a moment's



peace until I take her down into the mine; and as I can't very well take her alone, I ask as a special favor that one or both of you gentlemen accompany her."

"I am sorry, Mr. Harvey, to refuse, but such a trip is simply out of the question for me; perhaps Mr. Morris might help you out in this foolish whim of Madge's."

"Pray, James, don't, I beg of you, ask me to make such a trip," replied Morris.

Harvey coaxed and pleaded so hard that both Meek and Morris told him they would think it over, and that while they would not promise to go down into the mine, still, if the weather was fine, they might go out to Black Hawk, and wait on the surface while Harvey showed Madge through the mine.

"Then, as I shall be gone in the morning before you gentlemen arise, I will say good-bye until I see you to-morrow in Black Hawk. I shall hold you to your promise, Miss Malcom, and shall blame you if you allow them to disappoint me," smilingly retorted Harvey as he bade them good night.

As soon as Harvey retired, the trio of conspirators began to put the finishing touches on the plans for the morrow.

"You remember, Madge, that Mr. Morris wants to see all the mine that it is possible for a visitor to see. You might make it appear amusing in dragging him against his will into the different places; and get Harvey to enter into the spirit of the joke you are playing on him."

"I'll address you all the time as Miss Malcom," replied Morris, "and when I have seen all that is necessary, I'll address you as Madge."

"Then I'll take for my cue the word 'Madge'."

CHAPTER XLI.

MRS. ROBINSON had at last reached the height of her ambition. She was the acknowledged leader of Oxton society. Her house, with its interior decorations, was conceded to be the finest in either Oxton or Claughton. She had greenhouses built and stocked with the choicest of foreign and native plants. Her garden was a bower of roses, admired by some, envied by others. Her stables, with their antique Gothic roofs, built of the finest quality of pressed brick with white stone trimmings, added greatly to the splendor and charm of the place.

There is a great difference between the Robinsons of to-day and the Robinsons of the past. They are still the same flesh and blood, but the philosopher's stone has been found, and the god of Mammon reigning supreme, has attracted an army of satellites, who hover around them waiting to receive their pay in exchange for the homage they give.

Never in the history of mankind has the mad desire for wealth been so great as it is to-day. Gold is the "open sesame" to everything this side of the grave. What a farce we see at the death bed of one of our rich men, who possibly all his life has been of a stern, grasping, supercilious nature. With death staring him in the face he lies on his bed waiting with horror the call to the great unknown.

The semi-supplicating smile does not sit well on one who all his life has been stern and unyielding. This



smile, so bestowed on those he sees cringing around him, fighting as it does to force its way through the hard lines that have formed on his countenance through years of avarice—clashes when it comes in contact with them—ending in a horrid grin, sickening to behold.

He tries, in the few moments left him, to prepare to meet his God; and for the first time realizes that he has forsaken Him all his life in his greed for wealth, and as the dark, cold, damp grave yawns in front of him, he is horrified to such an extent that he seems bereft of his reason. Where now is the great power he wielded during his life? All gone. His relatives are all around him; some of whom he has not seen in years, but now like so many jackals, they scent the blood. The rich man is dying; how sympathetic they all appear! They are so obsequious to one another—but wait! Wait until the will is read, and then, but for the fear of the law, not for the love of God—they would no doubt be clutching at each other's throats for the spoils of their beloved relative.

The grand secret of all this adulation the Robinsons are receiving is the two millions that Robinson is reported to have made.



CHAPTER XLII.

THE time at last has come for the grand ball Mrs. Robinson so often spoke of giving. She has made up her mind that no matter what may happen in the future, the ball of the Robinson's shall be talked of in years to come. She will dazzle these Oxtonians so that they may carry back to their homes the memory of a splendor of which they had never dreamed. These and other thoughts of a like nature enlarged and gathered strength as *the demon god Vanity* took possession of her. From straightened pecuniary circumstances, Mrs. Robinson has leaped at a single bound to wealth and affluence. At this ball she intended and expected Ruth to surpass in dress and beauty all the young ladies in Oxton. This in itself was an overweening pride in her daughter, as Oxton had always been famous for its pretty girls.

The new wing that the Robinsons have built to their house makes their ball room the largest of any private residence in Oxton; also, a new feature is the semi-conservatory and lounging room that adjoins it. This room is greatly talked about. The statuary placed in the various angles is of the rarest kind, while the water from a number of small fountains ripples over trailing vines, adding a certain charm to the surroundings of the room. Adjoining this conservatory is another large room, on the door of which are the words in small letters, "The Lion's Den." Inside of this room may be seen a large plate glass mirror, reflecting daz-



zing cut glassware on an adjoining sideboard. The panels in the walls and ceiling of this room are also inlaid with mirrors, which, when the lights are lit, give the room a brilliancy of surpassing splendor. On the tables are match boxes and long churchwardens; also small death's head tobacco bowls filled with fragrant shag. Those not wishing the solace of a churchwarden can avail themselves of the choicest Havana cigars, a box of which is on each table.

The antique costumes of the waiters who are in attendance in this room, is set off by the immaculate linen coats of the mixers of the various beverages.

The fitting up of this room for the indulgence of her male guests is a grand stroke of Mrs. Robinson's, as it will no doubt be a favorite lounging place for the men, where they can sip their beverages and crack their little jokes, although while there, they are apt, under the influence of the seductive draughts, to forget the ladies who anxiously await them in the ball room. Mrs. Robinson has thought a little about such results, but reasons:

"I must make sure of the men; then the ladies will follow."

Mrs. Robinson has completed and arranged everything for the ball to her entire satisfaction. After taking a last survey of the various rooms to satisfy herself that nothing has been forgotten, she went to Ruth's room to have a few words with her before dressing for the evening.

"I want you, Ruth, dear," said Mrs. Robinson, "to assist me in the reception room this evening in receiving the guests; and as soon as you can spare your maid, I wish you would send her to me."

When Ruth's maid entered Mrs. Robinson's dressing room, she found the professional hair dresser working with nimble fingers her mistress' plaits of hair into the latest style. Mrs. Robinson, like the majority of ladies of uncertain age, is trying by artificial means to make up for the ravages of time. On her dressing table might be seen an assortment of cosmetics, pads, ribbons, jewels, and all that tends toward rejuvenating a one-time fashionable beauty.

Mrs. Robinson, after surveying herself in the large dressing mirrors, which are so arranged as to give a view of the back and front of the figure at the same time, is satisfied with her appearance, although her bodice is undergoing a strain that will test the strength of the fabric before the evening is over. It has taken the combined efforts of both the maids to fasten it—this while she drew in her breath.

The first guests have arrived, and Mrs. Robinson is very much annoyed at Ruth's not being at hand to assist her in receiving them.

The cause of Ruth's delay was that her ball dress was cut so low that she felt ashamed at seeing herself in the mirror, and against the protestations of her maid, she immediately changed it for another.

The dress that Ruth decided to wear was a superb creation of the dressmaker's art, cut high around the neck, covering from the vulgar gaze the person of the wearer.

By this time one-third of the guests had arrived, and Mrs. Robinson, excusing herself for a moment, hurried upstairs to find out the cause of Ruth's delay.

"Ruth!" she exclaimed with vehemence on entering



the room, "what's the meaning of this? Why have you not put on the ball dress?"

"Mamma, dear, I never could wear that dress. I would die with mortification at appearing before the guests in such a costume. Please don't ask me to wear it. Look at this, mamma; I like it ever so much better."

Mrs. Robinson's face paled with anger. "Leave the room," she exclaimed to the maid.

Smothering her passion, her blanched face and tightly compressed lips showed the raging inward fire as she approached her daughter.

"Tell me, dear, what is the reason you won't wear the ball dress? I'm sure it becomes you. If you don't wear it, after all the money it cost, I'll be miserable all the evening, as I've been thinking how you would out-shine all the other girls."

"Mamma, don't ask me the reason, please, why I won't wear that dress. All I know is that I felt ashamed of the maid when I had it on, and the very thought of appearing in a crowded ball room with my bosom exposed is more than I could possibly endure."

"Ruth," said her mother, "this is nothing more than a childish whim, and I won't tolerate any such prudery. If you never wear that dress again, you must wear it to-night. Understand, Ruth Robinson, that dress was made expressly for you to wear at this ball. To think that after all the trouble the dressmaker and I had to procure the right tint to tone your complexion, you should act so silly at the last moment. I'll never believe but this is a piece of stubbornness on your part."

Leaving the room, Mrs. Robinson called Ruth's maid, and in a peremptory tone of voice, said:

"Assist Ruth to take off that garment and put on the ball dress."

As soon as Mrs. Robinson left the room Ruth told the maid to put the ball dress away.

A diamond sunburst, a single rose; were all the adornments Ruth wore 'as she descended into the ball room.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE Earl of Dartmoor, who was visiting friends in Liverpool, had graduated from Cambridge in the same year as Rushton; and when Mrs. Robinson issued the invitations to her ball, Rushton lost no time in asking for one for the Earl, a request Mrs. Robinson was only too happy to grant. When the Oxtobians heard that a real, live Earl was to attend the Robinson ball, their jealousy was still more aroused at the prestige the Robinsons were attaining. When it was an assured fact that he would attend the ball, more than one young lady in a jesting manner, and at the same time inwardly wishing that it might be so, had said:

"Mamma, I am going to capture the Earl at the Robinson's ball to-night."

The shipping interests of Liverpool were never better represented than at this ball. There were the Ismays, Brocklebanks, McIvers, Irmys, and a score of others in the same line of business, who controlled



a great part of the merchant marine sailing out of the port of Liverpool.

The guests have all arrived except Rushton and the Earl of Dartmoor. Mrs. Robinson, who was extremely nervous lest something should prevent their coming, was on the point of interrogating one of Rushton's friends when their arrival was announced.

"I'm going to chide you, Mr. Rushton, for being so late. Do you know I was afraid something had happened and that you were going to disappoint us."

"The loss would have been ours, eh, Rushton?" exclaimed the Earl.

"Right you are, Dartmoor," answered Rushton, "I know nothing less than a broken limb would have kept us away."

Ruth had just made her appearance in the ball room, and as she walked through the room into the conservatory, brushed past the Earl, who, having left Rushton for a moment, was taking a glance at the surroundings.

The Earl of Dartmoor, as might be expected, had seen most of England's beauties, that is, those of the titled class, and it would have to be something extraordinary in the way of a beautiful woman to make him cast a second glance at her; but glance he did when he saw Ruth, and stood politely to one side to allow her to pass; then turned and gazed after her, and without thinking what he was doing, followed. As he made his appearance in the ball room, Rushton came quickly towards him.

"Ruth is here; come along, and I'll introduce you."

"Rushton," said the Earl, "I've seen the most beautiful woman that I ever saw in my life, and if you'll

only introduce me to her, or if you don't know her, kindly ask Mrs. Robinson to do so, I shall consider it the greatest favor, and will promise to reciprocate the kindness when in London."

"Well, show me the Venus, and I'll endeavor to comply with your request."

As they made their way through the ball room, they suddenly came into the presence of Mrs. Robinson and Ruth.

The introduction being over, Rushton smilingly said:

"Now, Dartmoor, if you'll show me the lady that has bewitched you, I'll endeavor, with the aid of our hostess, to satisfy your craving."

"My dear Rushton, you've already done so; the lady is here."

"What are you gentlemen laughing about so heartily?" queried Mrs. Robinson.

"Shall I tell, Earl?"

"If you do, Rushton, I'll never forgive you."

"Why, Dartmoor, I'm sure there's no harm, and I know Mrs. Robinson will be elated when she hears it."

"Come, Earl, allow Mr. Rushton to tell us. I'm sure it can't be anything but to our advantage."

"Oh, it's nothing serious, I can assure you, Mrs. Robinson," exclaimed Dartmoor.

When Rushton explained this episode to Mrs. Robinson and Ruth, Ruth was visibly embarrassed, but Mrs. Robinson, swelling with motherly pride as she looked at the Earl, said:

"The joke is on you, Earl."

"I quite agree with you, Mrs. Robinson," exclaimed Dartmoor. "Now that the joke is on me, I'll be satisfied if Miss Ruth will favor me with this waltz."

The greatest consternation was caused by Ruth's



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costume—that is, among the ladies. Various reasons were advanced, but Ruth's extreme modesty was never suspected for wearing a dress cut so high in the neck.

It had been the talk of Oxton ever since the ball had been announced as to what Ruth would wear, and how she would appear in the ball room, and the guests in consequence had pictured in their minds a gorgeous display of fine raiment.

Walking down the room on the arm of the Earl as the music of the waltz ceased, the gossips commenced to discuss the possibilities of Ruth capturing him.

As Ruth sat listening to a young officer who had been invalided home from the Boer war, there was not a male guest in the room who did not admire her. The keen intellect, the earnestness with which she listened, the beautiful head with its forehead of marked intelligence, adorned as it was with the richest tresses of nut-brown hair — this appearance, set off with her simple adornments, made her a picture men love to gaze on.

When the last dance before intermission commenced, Rushton escorted Ruth to the conservatory, where there was a collation of dainty tid-bits that the art of the French cook had been tasked to design. Serving these refreshments were the prettiest of young English girls dressed in peasant costume; their rosy cheeks and healthy appearance adding an extra charm and relish to the viands.

The men who served the liquid refreshments in the Lion's Den were all dressed in Louis XVI costumes; and as they marched to and fro, carrying on silver trays iced drinks of the latest bacchanalian order from the hands of the professional mixers of the seductive draughts, it caused the old rounders, and the young sprigs that were following in their footsteps, to wish

that the night could be prolonged.

Wines of all vintages were cooling in crushed ice, and the slightest wish of any of the guests was at once gratified. While the younger element were sampling the fancy American named drinks, the old boys adhered to their favorite tippie.

Robinson had danced once after the greatest pressure had been brought to bear on him; then with one or two old friends retired to the Lion's Den. After being served with several rounds of refreshments they lighted their cigars, and their wives, for the time being, were as completely forgotten as if they had never existed. It is safe to say, however, that some of them would pay the piper when they reached their respective homes.

Ruth's love for her uncle, who had been paying a sick call, and at this time arrived, was plainly visible by the demonstrative manner in which she received him.

"I thought that you would never come, uncle," said she.

"My dear, old Mrs. Barton is very low, and I'm afraid she'll never recover. The last word she said before I left her was, to be sure and tell you how she enjoyed the jellies you brought her; also the flowers, which the old lady raves about being so beautiful."

"When you left her was she comfortable, uncle?"

"She wasn't suffering any, but as I have told you, I don't think she'll ever recover. You must try and forget Mrs. Barton to-night, and enjoy yourself; in the morning you can call upon her and take her some more flowers; she thinks more of you than all of us put together. I'm beginning to get jealous, Ruth; my parishioners will forsake me for you if this keeps on;

you ought to have gone in for the ministry."

While Ruth and her uncle were holding this conversation, more than one young gentleman was wishing the Rev. Charles Anderson anywhere else than where he was at the present time. Just then, the Earl of Dartmoor and Rushton joined them.

"Doctor, how are you?" inquired Rushton. "Allow me to introduce to you the Earl of Dartmoor."

"I suppose you don't very often get to an out-of-the-way place like this, Earl?" said the Doctor.

"Not very often, Doctor; but I've heard of you a great many times in London; besides, I've taken great pleasure in reading one of your books."

"If I've been the means of bestowing a moment's pleasure on you, Earl, I'm delighted, I'm sure, to hear you say so. Life at best is short, and I think we ought to assist others all we can by word or deed, and those we cannot know personally, we sometimes reach through books. I don't know how far I've succeeded, but my aim in writing was to do as much good as I could, independent of the literary qualities of the book."

"I'm sure you've succeeded, Doctor," replied the Earl in his genial manner.

The Earl of Dartmoor was not one of the aristocracy pictured in fiction as a mere drawing room ornament, with an implied idea that being an Earl, he was made of different clay. He was a man in the true sense of the word. He had taken first honors at Cambridge, besides pulling an oar in the "eight," which, to say the least, means that he was somewhat of an athlete. He was more; that is, he was a good fellow, and the fact that he was an Earl did not in the least

detract from your liking him heartily. He had certain talents, and without half trying could paint a fair landscape, or write a book that would pass muster among the most severe of the critics. What endeared him most to his male friends was his unassuming ways. He, like other men of his station and standing in society, was surrounded by a number of snobs, who on different occasions took it upon themselves to chide him for his democratic principles; and in a half joking manner would admonish him for even speaking to the nobodys, as they chose to call them. The Earl was so full of the milk of human kindness, that while he could see through the shallowness of these so-called friends, to avoid an argument, assumed an indifference, not wishing to hurt their feelings.

This diffidence on his part was very much mistaken by his new acquaintances, and his habit of not wishing to intrude or appear presumptuous was taken as a kind of hauteur. To like the man was to see him along with one or two bosom chums in some place where they were not known.

Ruth had danced several times with the Earl, and when he came again to solicit another, she, on the plea of being tired, asked if he would not excuse her. Her mother being present, the Earl asked if she would honor him with a waltz, which request was not at all disagreeable to Mrs. Robinson.

When the music of the waltz ceased, the Earl and Rushton walked arm in arm towards the Lion's Den. After being served with liquid refreshments, and while they were enjoying a cigar, the Earl commenced the conversation by saying:

"I say, Rushton, how do you stand with Miss Robinson?"



"I don't quite understand you, Dartmoor," replied Rushton.

"I don't wish to pry into any of your private affairs, Rushton, but if I may so ask, are there any obstacles in the way?"

"You ask if there are any obstacles in the way. I believe there are; but to-night, Dartmoor, I'll know just how I stand—obstacles or no obstacles. I'll have an understanding with her in reference to these obstacles, as you term them. To begin with, there is a young gentleman who is at present trying to convince the Boers that they are in the wrong. I did hear that this young man was engaged to her; but her mother gave me to understand that there was nothing in the rumor, and that the attachment was merely the whim of an unsophisticated school girl."

"Perhaps the Boers will help you with a kindly bullet."

"Dartmoor, I draw the line at wishing the death of any one to obtain her."

Rushton did not mean what he said. If he could have sent Captain Hardesty on a forlorn mission he would have done so. That was his nature.

"Don't be so dreadfully in earnest, Rushton," continued Dartmoor, "as neither of us, I'm sure, would do anything to injure this gentleman, if it was in our power to do so; and when I mentioned that a friendly bullet might put an end to your rival, it was merely a haphazard shot that flew out of the magazine of the brain."

"You must excuse me, Dartmoor, I did not mean anything; but I seem to lose control of myself when talking about her."



CHAPTER XLIV.

RUSHTON was very despondent at his failure to appear before the assembled guests in the light of the *fiancé* of Ruth, and which he expected would be fully borne out during the evening by their close attention to each other. This creation of Rushton's mind was, as he supposed, to reach the climax by Ruth's consent to their engagement before he retired from the ball.

While at college, Rushton had been generally disliked, and the only friends he had were those young fellows whom his money could influence. The Earl had never taken kindly to him; but being of an indolent nature, had never roused himself to show any great dislike; while Rushton, on the other hand, positively refused to be frowned down by the set that the Earl had around him; and when by accident they had met in Liverpool, had allowed himself to be persuaded to attend the Robinson ball.

As soon as the Earl saw the state of affairs, and how desperately Rushton was in love with Ruth, he curbed his own ardent desire to become better acquainted with her. He had been more smitten by Ruth than by any of the young ladies he had met during a half dozen seasons of the rounds of the London ball rooms; but while there was the faintest hope of Rushton being considered in the light of a husband, he would not, no—no matter how keen his desire, allow his feelings to be shown.



For the present Rushton was dropped as completely from the mind of Mrs. Robinson as if the earth had opened and swallowed him. An Earl was something she had never dreamed of catching for Ruth, and when, through the influence of Rushton, the Earl had consented to attend the ball, Mrs. Robinson, whose ambition was forever soaring, was determined that Ruth should try to capture him. Whether she could bring this about or not remained to be seen; but she was bent on getting as much prestige out of the Earl's presence at the ball as she possibly could; and as he appeared to be infatuated with Ruth she would leave nothing undone to bring about the match, and if nothing came of it, she would create the impression that Ruth had refused him.

As the Earl and Rushton emerged from the Lion's Den, Mrs. Robinson approached them.

"You truants! Where have you been all this time? The young ladies are very angry with you for deserting them in the manner you have."

Mrs. Robinson marched Rushton and the Earl to the conservatory, where she had left Ruth with several other young ladies.

"Here they are, girls; I've found them, and like an avenging goddess, have brought them here for their punishment."

Miss Ferncliffe, who had previously danced with the Earl, replied archly:

"I'll begin now to administer the punishment. Come, Earl, and give us an account of yourself. Why did you and Mr. Rushton run away? I suppose we don't come up to your expectations? You Londoners are so exacting; and when you attend a provincial

ball of this kind, put it down as slow."

Just at this time the young serving maids, looking pretty in their peasant costumes, brought in Japanese trays laden with delicious iced drinks and creams of all flavors.

"I'm afraid this is scarcely strong enough for you gentlemen," said Mrs. Robinson.

The Earl smilingly replied:

"I don't know about our friend Rushton, but this just suits me."

"I wish you would make the Earl eat another of those dishes of cream," replied Rushton. "I can see he is almost undergoing capital punishment, Mrs. Robinson, trying to please you."

"That won't do, Rushton; Mrs. Robinson knows that I am enjoying this. Isn't that so, Mrs. Robinson?"

"I don't know, Earl, I'm sure, but I'll take your word for it."

At this time the orchestra began playing a waltz. The Earl, turning around, found that Rushton had disappeared. Seeing one or two of the young gentlemen coming towards Ruth, the Earl, now that Rushton was not on hand to ask her to dance, seized the opportunity of soliciting the waltz.

"Are you engaged for this waltz, Miss Robinson?"

"I'm sorry, Earl, but my uncle has asked me to dance. Here he comes now."

Miss Ferncliffe cast longing eyes at the Earl as he walked off in search of Rushton.

As Ruth was sitting conversing with her mother and her uncle, the Earl approached, saying:

"You can't refuse me this dance, Miss Robinson;

I don't see any of your admirers around."

"I'm afraid, Earl, you'll have to excuse me; I do really feel very tired."

"I think, Ruth, dear, that you ought to dance this waltz with the Earl; if you don't, I'm afraid he'll pay us back when we visit him. Am I not right, Earl?"

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Robinson, to be obliged to differ with you this time. I believe what your daughter said when she told me that she was not very fond of dancing; and anything that would cause her annoyance would not be a pleasure to me."

"Earl, I can't refuse you this dance after championing me in such a manner," replied Ruth.

Several of the ladies had heard Mrs. Robinson's remark that the Earl had extended them an invitation to visit the Dartmoors at their country residence at Sussex. This, and the fact that the Earl seemed to pay such attention to Ruth, was sufficient to cause their talking of the possibilities of the Robinson girl taking her place among the titled gentry of London.

After dancing with the Earl, Ruth's uncle took her arm and led her into the conservatory—watching them was the Earl of Dartmoor, who, musing to himself, said:

"She's the most modest and beautiful woman I have ever met."

CHAPTER XLV.

THE guests are departing. All is commotion. Footmen and maids are obsequiously dancing attendance on the scions of their respective houses; while amidst the merry prattle of the commingling of so many people, Mr. and Mrs. Robinson's voices could be distinctly heard as they bade good-bye to their guests.

The Earl of Dartmoor was stopping at the house of Rushton as his guest, and while the Robinson guests were departing, Ruth was entertaining Rushton and the Earl until such time as the Robinson carriage was ready to drive them home—Rushton not ordering his own as he and the Earl had intended to walk; but which act Mrs. Robinson immediately squelched by ordering the Robinson carriage.

As Mrs. Robinson returned from seeing the departure of the last of the guests, she found Ruth seated at one of the tables in the conservatory with Rushton and the Earl. She insisted that before departing they take some refreshments, which the Earl politely refused, but when Mrs. Robinson pressed him further, he, wishing to give Rushton the chance he ardently desired—to be alone with Ruth—said:

"If your bacchanalian knights have not shut up shop, Mrs. Robinson, I'll indulge in one, as the Americans call them, 'night-caps.'"

Entering the Lion's Den, the Earl took a seat at one of the tables. During the evening, Rushton, as



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stated, had told the Earl that he would know his fate in reference to Ruth before he left the Robinson residence.

Like all men in Rushton's position, and of his temperament, it took very little to make him jealous. He began to think of the number of times Ruth had danced with the Earl during the evening, while she had only danced with him once.

"I suppose if I had a title," he murmured, "I could win her without any trouble"; such a thought being a great injustice to Ruth.

While the Earl was in the Lion's Den sipping the tempting beverages, and meditating on the events of the evening, Rushton, realizing that he was alone with Ruth, made up his mind to know his fate.

Addressing her in tones of suppressed excitement, he, without the least ceremony, declared his love for her, and then asked her to become his wife.

Rushton, after declaring his love, was in that state of excitement which cannot be truly expressed except by the person that is suffering the greatest agony with which human nature was ever afflicted. There is no pity; no solace; nothing to act as a comforter to the unfortunate being who has to battle with unrequited love. The weak minded often resort to suicide; the strong minded that ever effacing power, "time." The person who fights and wins this battle has achieved a greater victory than the greatest warrior that ever lived. The battle of the warrior is won or lost in a day; but this fight goes on for an indefinite period and at times only ends with the grave. Morning, noon or night gives no relief to those who suffer from it; it is the last thought at night, and the first in the morn-

ing. Sometimes in the sweet oblivion of our dreams we have won the object of our devotion and the heavenly bliss that we were enjoying at such times, on awakening, is found to be an illusion; then the rude shock on realizing, as the cold, gray world stares at us with a cynicism—the myth—oh, that we could have dreamed on!

Rushton's countenance as he sat in the chair after declaring his love, seemed to have a defiant look backed by a desperation that was liable to lead him to any extreme; then it seemed to change to one of yearning.

Ruth's sympathetic heart ached, as she listened without a murmur to his declaration of love. Recovering her self possession, as she wiped her tear stained eyes, and looking him in the face with an expression of truthfulness that commanded respect, she replied:

"Mr. Rushton, I am grieved, and my heart aches to see you suffer on my account. If you knew the agony that I am suffering, and how it grieves me to think that I am the cause of your unhappiness, I'm sure you'd have pity on me. The honor that you have conferred on me this evening, by asking me to become your wife, is more than I deserve. I have ever tried to make our relations towards each other that of friends only. I supposed you knew all the time, Mr. Rushton, that I am engaged to Captain Hardesty, and that you would never think of me in any other light than as a friend. I can't find words, believe me, Mr. Rushton, to express my sorrow at knowing that you suffer on my account."

Rushton, all his life, through an over-abundance of money, had been in the habit of having everything his

own way; and now being thwarted and maddened by Ruth's refusal, still further pressed his suit, but in a bold and defiant manner.

"I beseech you as a gentleman, Mr. Rushton, to spare me this suffering. I am engaged to Captain Hardesty, and nothing but death can part us."

The Earl and Mrs. Robinson at this moment came into the room. Rushton, hearing the footsteps, turned in his chair as they approached.

"Well, Mr. Rushton, how did you enjoy the ball?" said she.

"It was grand."

Then ensued one of those awkward situations when one always wishes himself a thousand miles away.

Mrs. Robinson knew nothing of the pending situation until she came into the conservatory after the departure of the guests; then the haggard expression on the countenance of Rushton, and the sorrowful appearance of Ruth, told her what had happened. Her woman's intuition saw at a glance that Rushton had proposed and been refused.

The Earl had only to look at his friend to know the result of his declaration of love, and addressing Rushton in a jesting manner, broke the extreme frigidity of the situation by saying:

"Rushton, my dear fellow, don't you think we are imposing on the good nature of our hostess? Come, let us depart, or I'm afraid Mrs. Robinson will never again extend to us another invitation."

The Robinson carriage with its prancing steeds having drawn up at the front entrance, Rushton and the Earl departed, the one vowing that he would never again darken the door of the Robinsons; the other

thinking he would like to be doing so continually.

While they were being driven to the residence of Rushton, the Earl tried to learn the result of Rushton's interview with Ruth.

"Wait until we arrive at the house, Dartmoor, and I'll explain all."

If Dartmoor had expected to see a lovesick swain when he reached the Rushton residence, he was very much mistaken. Rushton, true to his arrogant disposition, grew defiant when speaking of Ruth. He vowed that he would bring her to her senses, and acted in such a low manner that the Earl, who, as stated, had never been very intimate with him at college, grew disgusted, and as Rushton threw himself on the lounge, he likewise stretched himself in one of the large chairs and began to moralize.

As the rings of smoke from his cigar chased each other towards the ceiling, the Earl of Dartmoor watched their flight as he ran over in his mind the events of the evening, until the fatigue from dancing and the wine he had consumed began to have their effect, and it was not long before he fell into a sound sleep. When he awoke it was broad daylight.

Looking around the room for Rushton, he espied that worthy still sound asleep on the lounge. Undoing his necktie and taking off his collar, he said:

"Sleep on, old man, sleep on; it will do you more good than anything else in the world."

With as little noise as possible, the Earl arranged his toilet and made his way to the reception room.



CHAPTER XLVI.

GOOD morning, Mr. Rushton," said the Earl, addressing Rushton, Sr.

"Good morning, Earl; how did you sleep? And where's that son of mine?"

"As to your first question, Mr. Rushton, I slept, as they say, 'like a log'; and your second query as to your son, he is doing that which we should be, getting his natural allowance of sleep."

"Trust you young dogs for taking care of yourselves; but I don't blame you. By the way, Earl, what did you think of the ball?"

"It was splendid, and I never enjoyed myself better."

"Well, that's the best ball that has ever been given in Oxtan; but I suppose it does not come up to your London affairs?"

"We have nothing better in London than the ball Mrs. Robinson gave last evening; of course, there are some of the places that are larger, and the people a little more fastidious; but take it all in all, I prefer a ball like last night's to one of those enormous affairs, where you are lost sight of entirely, and too much time and attention are given to certain personages."

"Upon my word, Earl, I believe you are the most democratic titled personage in all England; and if they were all like you I should have a better opinion of them."

"The titled gentry of England are not a bad set, Mr. Rushton, and you'd find that out if you were

thoroughly acquainted with them; they are a very much maligned class, and the people who malign them most are those who have never been brought in contact with the aristocracy, but form their ideas from sensational newspapers which cater to the masses for their votes at election time."

"Well, I've no doubt, Earl, that there is a great deal of truth in what you say. After breakfast you had better come with me to the office; you can leave word for Arthur to follow.

"Come, the carriage is at the door; I'm a little late this morning, so you must excuse me for hurrying you."

When the Earl and Rushton, Sr., arrived at the office of the latter, he handed the Earl the morning paper, and asked that he excuse him while he opened his mail.

Lunch time having come around, Rushton, Sr., proposed that they go over to the Adelphi Hotel. As they entered the lobby they met quite a number of the gentlemen who had attended the ball the evening previous, with Robinson in the center of the coterie. It appeared that they had called upon Robinson at his office to congratulate him on the success of the ball; and insisted that he accompany them to the hotel for lunch; the truth of it was that the "old boys" had indulged a little too much at the ball, and had that "day after feeling," and could not get down to business in the right manner. When this little party met the Earl and Rushton, Sr., there was a jollification all around. They ordered a private room with instructions for lunch to be served at once. While lunch



was being prepared, the Earl ordered wine for the party.

While the men who had attended the ball were celebrating at the hotel, their wives and daughters were doing the same at their homes, but in a different manner. Dawdling over tea, they discussed the merits of the ball and the people who attended it. We may rest assured that the costumes and appearance of the ladies who were present at the ball were fully discussed; and no doubt some were frights, while others were just too lovely for anything—according to the nettle or rose-tree the talker wished to implant in the minds of her hearers.

The gentlemen at the hotel, after they had lunch and the wine began to flow, forgot all about the ball and the people who attended it, except those who were present. First one subject, then another, and so on until the conversation became general. It began with cricket; then drifted on to yachting; then to horse racing; from horse racing to coursing; from coursing to prize fighting; from prize fighting to cross country racing with the hounds, and so on through all the sporting events. The "old boys" each in their day (to hear them talk), had been a champion at one or another of the sporting events enumerated; and, under the influence of the continual supply of wine, the challenges flew thick and fast. Rickman declared that his leg hit from the Birkenhead grounds, where the ball smashed the window of the refreshment room at the other end of the park, had never been equalled. Darbyshire declared he could take Rickman's stump in two overs. Another of the "old boys" said he was not afraid to put the gloves on with any of them.

There was good-natured bantering and joking, and the many challenges would have done credit to the present day champions of the manly art.

While they were discussing the ball during the lull in the sporting events, Rushton, Sr., said:

"I'm afraid, Robinson, you've been the means of getting all the boys into trouble."

"How's that, Rushton, my dear fellow?"

"Why,—confound it, that Lion's Den of yours will be our Waterloo as soon as our dear wives—God bless them—get us alone."

"Right you are there, Rushton," said Wilson of the Hermitage.

They were a merry party, and before they could all get through, each in his own particular way, narrating the event in his life where he had shone to advantage in some particular instance in the field of sports, where he had won the day for his team, or first at the death of the fox, or won out on his book for the Derby, or Grand National, or landed the biggest fish (at which there was great derision from the party), who cried in chorus, "Fish stories are barred!" the time arrived when each of these noble British merchants would sedately enter his residence with a suppressed yawn at having been over-worked at his office.



CHAPTER XLVII.

AFTER bidding Madge, her uncle and Morris good night, Harvey retired to bed with visions of Madge and himself nicely ensconced in a rural villa. Next morning he was on his way to the mine.

When the noon train arrived at Black Hawk, Harvey was nervously watching for the appearance of the carriage which he had ordered to convey the party to the mine. He had about given them up, and as he retraced his steps towards the office, said to Ben:

"They haven't come, Ben; I suppose they'll be here on the afternoon train."

Not being satisfied about their non-arrival, he went once more to the office door to take a last look, when a voice called in a familiar manner, "Hello, Harvey!"

"Great Scott, Sam, where in the devil did you come from? Have you dropped from the clouds? Come into the office and let me know all the news."

"Just excuse me, Sam, a minute," said Harvey as his friend entered the office. Going outside he sent Ben to the telegraph office with a message addressed to Meek, telling him not to come out as a friend had called unexpectedly; and that he would not be able to give them the attention he would like; also that he would call the following day to make new arrangements.

"Well, I received your letter, Harvey," said his friend as Harvey re-entered the office, "and would have answered it, but as I expected to take a trip to

Chicago and fix up a deal, thought that I would let it go and come and see you instead. Everything has gone through without a hitch; but I must start East again to-morrow, as they are waiting for me down there."

"You're surely not going away to-morrow, Sam?"

"I must, Harvey."

"I never saw anything like it; you Eastern fellows are always so blamed uneasy until you get back to your dear 'York.' "

"Well, I'll stay here to-night, Harvey; then start in the morning for the only city in the Union."

"Bah!" exclaimed Harvey. "I'm miserable from the time I put my foot in it until I get away again, and never feel so relieved as I do when the train is pulling out from the stew-pan. My! but she's a sizzler in the summer—a regular oven, and the people look about half baked. None of your New York for me, Sammy."

"Pshaw, Harvey! when you live outside of New York, you're merely camping out,—vegetating, as it were."

"Well, there's nothing like a man being satisfied; and I see that we both are in respect to where we wish to live."

"Where are you going to put up for the night, Sam?" inquired Harvey.

"The Albany, I guess."

When they arrived in Denver they at once made their way to the Albany, and instead of going into the dining room to dinner, Harvey suggested the café.

The cause of the visit to Harvey of this man Sam, was a little stock deal that he and Harvey were work-



ing together in Jack-Pot on their own account.

In the morning Harvey took the first train to Black Hawk, the man Sam, taking one for the East.

Harvey came into Denver again in the afternoon, and on arriving at the hotel went directly to the room of Meek.

"Mr. Harvey," exclaimed Madge, "I'm delighted to see you. Mr. Morris and uncle have gone for a walk. Won't you take a seat and wait? I know they'll not be long, and I'm sure they'll be pleased to see you."

Harvey had not the least idea of taking his departure when he learned that Madge was alone, and inwardly hoped that Meek and Morris would take a very long walk. Sitting alone in the room with Madge was an unexpected pleasure, and after explaining and apologizing for postponing the trip to the mine, he listened with rapt attention to the rapid fire of her conversation. Shrewd and cunning as he was, he was merely a catspaw in the hands of this clever woman.

After conversing for some time, and there being no sign of Morris and Meek putting in their appearance, Madge suggested to Harvey that they take a walk and see if they could find them. Harvey was delighted with the idea.

Walking along the main street, and gazing casually into the store windows, they came to a florist's; here. Harvey made an awkward pause, and timidly asked Madge if she would come into the store, as he wished to purchase some flowers for her.

Now, as Madge was thinking of something more expensive than flowers, she smilingly admonished him for being so extravagant with his money. Harvey laughed good-naturedly, thinking what a saving girl she was.

As they proceeded on their walk they came to a jeweler's store.

Madge, who had taken Harvey's arm, slowly but surely, and apparently in the most indifferent manner, led him to the window.

"How beautiful these stores are," said she, "I always admire them."

Harvey, who had been cudgeling his brain as to how he could make her a present, and whether or not she would accept one if he attempted to do so, and if her uncle would be angry at him for making so bold, and looking on this as possibly the best chance he would have, finally hit upon an idea.

As they still gazed on the beautiful display of glittering diamonds, which were gotten up in the most unique manner to please and fascinate the eye, Harvey broke the silence by saying:

"Won't you please come into the store, Miss Malcom? I wish to make a present to a young lady, and am not sure what I ought to buy her."

For once Madge was taken off her guard, and her womanly nature was aroused. She did not know whether it was jealousy or selfishness, but whatever it was, it annoyed her. To think that she, who was in such need of a diamond ring or gold watch, was to be assigned the duty of selecting them for others, and dare not, even by the slightest hint, assume that she would like to be the recipient of such articles.

Her first thoughts were that she would pick out some cheap, frivolous article. If Harvey was going to purchase jewelry for a young lady, why shouldn't she be the young lady?

With these ideas in her head she entered the store.

"How old is the young lady?" said she, as they sauntered up to the counter.

"I don't know, I'm sure" (this with a smile), "but I think about your age."

"Ah!" thought she, "he intended to surprise me; if I'm not mistaken I'll surprise him before we leave the store. He said she was about my age, then smiled. However, I'll change my mind, and select the most expensive articles in the store; better to take a chance on them being for some one else than to find they are for me, and that I've selected some frivolous things I don't want. I would die with mortification at being sold, which would serve me right for my meanness."

As they were gazing on the various articles in the show cases on the counter, a smart young Hebrew salesman approached, saying:

"What can I do for you, sir?"

Harvey, with his awkward and embarrassed manner, could be read by this young Hebrew as plainly as if he had known his innermost thoughts. He fairly chuckled to himself at the prospects of the sale.

Ignoring the question of the salesman, Harvey said:

"Now, Miss Malcom, if you will pick out what you consider a suitable present for a young lady, I shall be greatly obliged to you."

Hearing this, the salesman took his cue that Madge was the one to please in the selection of the articles, while Madge, with a view to finding how high Harvey would go in his purchases, said:

"Have you no idea, Mr. Harvey, what you think the young lady would like?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. Here, young man, show

us what you've got suitable for a young lady," said he to the salesman.

Madge, with a beaming smile at the salesman, who returned it in a gallant manner, was soon busy examining diamond rings, watches, bracelets, and all the other adornments of which ladies are so fond.

Under the persuasive power of the salesman, Madge dangled over an expensive gold watch. Laying this to one side, the salesman, who knew his business, soon had her absorbed in a diamond ring with a Tiffany setting. When both of these articles had been approved of by Madge, who was allowing the clerk to force them on her without a murmur, she said to Harvey:

"I think, Mr. Harvey, either of these articles would be a suitable present for a young lady."

"They are both very pretty," he replied, "but I don't know which she would like the best. I think the safest plan would be to take both."

At this sally of Harvey's, both Madge and the salesman smiled.

The cost of the watch and ring was so high that Madge moved away as the salesman began to give them an extra polish with the chamois leather, and while Harvey was drawing forth a plethoric looking pocketbook she was apparently absorbed in gazing at various articles of bric-a-brac in another part of the store, paying no attention whatever to Harvey and the salesman. Why should she? It was none of her business. She had only assisted Mr. Harvey in selecting a present for a young lady. She thought, however, that if by chance these presents were not for her, she would, as she afterwards declared, "feel like sinking through the ground."



CHAPTER XLVIII.

WITH the presents in their neat little plush-lined cases in his pocket, Harvey and Madge, arm in arm, wended their way back to the hotel. Now was Harvey in a dilemma how to present them. His first thought was, would she receive them? He felt truly that he had an elephant on his hands. Might she not think him presumptuous in taking the liberty to do such a thing? Suppose her uncle should take him to task for daring to think that his niece would accept such costly gifts from a mere stranger?

While these thoughts were coursing through Harvey's brain and causing him a great deal of worry, Madge, on the other hand, was equally worried, for Harvey had not spoken a word since leaving the store. Suppose, after all the pains she had taken to choose the finest and most expensive articles, they were for another. She was crushed. Would he ever speak? She was almost afraid to speak to him for fear of diverting his thoughts from the presents. She dare not, even by the faintest hint, allude to them; and Harvey, who had framed, during the short walk back to the hotel, a dozen little speeches, could not make up his mind which was the most appropriate to say in presenting them. When they were within a block of the hotel, it was a case of "now or never" with him.

Stopping abruptly, he began in an embarrassed manner :

"Miss Malcom, I hope you will forgive me for acting as I have in reference to these presents. I bought them for a young lady; but I knew if I asked her to come into the store she would positively refuse. You are that young lady, Miss Malcom, and I wish you to accept them in remembrance of your visit to Denver."

"Oh, Mr. Harvey, you are too generous; I'm sure my uncle would never allow me to accept such costly gifts."

"Tut, tut, nonsense. I've no one in the world to buy presents for, and if I take a notion to purchase something for a young lady, I don't see where the harm comes in."

"I'd like you to promise me one thing, however, Miss Malcom," continued Harvey.

Madge was ready, now that she had the watch and ring, to promise anything and everything, and was as ready to break her promise if it were not in keeping with her views. She took it for granted that Harvey was about to propose.

"Just name it," said she, replying to Harvey's question, "and if it's in my power, rest assured that whatever it is, I'll comply with your request."

"It's a simple affair; but I would like you to promise me that you won't mention this little present until after I leave the hotel. I don't know how your uncle will take it; but I never could stand thanks or compliments. I always feel like running away when anything like that occurs."

"You certainly have my promise, Mr. Harvey; and it's just like you to be so modest."

As they entered the hotel, they met Meek and Morris.

"Harvey, I'm getting jealous of you; Madge will leave me entirely if this keeps on."

"Don't mind him in the least. You know, Mr. Harvey, my uncle is what they call an old 'stick-in-the-mud' and never thinks of taking me anywhere."

After a little all-around good-natured banter, Madge retired to her room, and the gentlemen, not having to take so long to dress for dinner, decided they had time for one game of billiards.

When Meek received the dispatch from Harvey stating that one of his friends had called, he was very much worried; so it was arranged to give Madge's idea to see the mine more the appearance of a whim than anything else; also, Meek was to feign sickness and positively refuse Harvey's invitation. He reasoned it out thus:

"I can be of no earthly use to you, Morris, as I couldn't tell the best piece of quartz from the commonest rock. Then Madge can pout at being disappointed, and I'll suggest that you accompany her; you can refuse at first on account of some other duties, but after some coaxing on the part of Madge, and possibly Harvey, you finally consent."

After dinner the little party adjourned to Meek's room, where Harvey once more explained the cause of his failure to meet them and show them through come to-morrow there'll be no drawback to the trip." the mine.

"I've told your niece, Mr. Meek, that if you can

"I'm sorry, Mr. Harvey, that I cannot accept your invitation; my cough troubled me all last night and

I'm afraid a damp place like a mine would have a tendency to make it worse."

All Harvey's suspicions were thrown to the winds, and he felt ashamed for even entertaining such an idea of such good people. "Here I, at times, thought they might be spies and actually they refuse to go down the mine when they have a chance!" Harvey protested so strongly against Meek's refusal that at last Meek suggested that Morris might accompany Madge.

"How do you feel about it, Morris?"

"Why can't you go, James?"

"Please don't ask me, Morris; you know how I suffered last night."

"Well, James. I'm willing to do anything to accommodate you; but you know I'm getting along in years, and not over anxious to run risks down in gold mines."

"There's no risk whatever, Mr. Morris, I give you my word of honor; you'll be as safe as you are in this room," replied Harvey.

"Please come with me to-morrow, Mr. Morris," pleaded Madge. Harvey joining in with her plea, the invitation was accepted for the following day.

The next day was bright and warm, and Madge, arrayed in a gray traveling dress, with Harvey's presents showing to the best advantage, and a becoming bouquet that Morris had purchased for her, made her way along with him to the depot.

Harvey was on hand when they arrived in Black Hawk. He barely gave them time to alight before he began to thank them for coming; and suggested that they go into the office a while before donning their visiting suits. He also had a surprise for them in a light lunch he had prepared.

As they sat down to partake of the lunch, the situation had a touch of romance in it, at least, for Madge. It seemed so much out of the common to be seated in the office of the manager of a gold mine partaking of such a nice collation. Harvey had had grave fears in preparing this lunch, thinking it would not be choice enough for such cultured people, but he was amply rewarded and delighted at the running fire in its praise which Madge continually showered on him. He was like a school boy with his first pair of red-top boots. He filled the dainty wine glasses, and tried with might and main, but in the most awkward manner, to urge them to eat. At every sip that Madge would take of the wine, Harvey would refill her glass, doing the same for Morris, and between times trying to keep up with Madge's conversation. The collation that Harvey had prepared would have been sufficient for a dozen of his miners, and what it lacked in variety was made up for in quantity. The dainty way, however, in which Morris and Madge pecked at it, reminded Harvey more of canary birds than human beings.

Old Ben, who had been well posted to make the visit as interesting as possible for the guests, was ready to receive them as they reached the first floor. He stood there, cap in hand, a benign smile on his countenance, waiting for Harvey to introduce him.

"Mr. Morris, Miss Malcom, this is my foreman, Ben Doyle."

"How d've do, Mr. Doyle?" from both Madge and Morris, and as Madge held out her daintily gloved hand, Ben, who was almost afraid of grasping such

a little apology in his huge paw, merely touched the tips of her fingers.

"Now Ben, I want you to show my friends all there is to be seen in a gold mine."

"I'm afraid, sir, that the lady will not be able to get around some of the drifts and cuts. I can take them in all of the places where there is head-room."

"Well, lead the way, Ben, and we'll see just how far we can get with safety to Miss Malcom," replied Harvey.

The party explored all of the workings on the first floor; then descended to the second. This was the floor where Harvey and Ben "pulled the wool" over the eyes of the reporters. But in Morris he had met a reporter who was considered the best all-around mining expert in the United States. When the Comstock lode had created such excitement, and all kinds of rumors were afloat as to the richness of the strikes at different times during the zenith of the career of that mine, the report that Morris sent to his paper could be relied on to the very letter. There wasn't a move on the board he was not up to in the way of deceiving reporters.

When they reached the second floor Old Ben began to dwell upon the richness of the ore, while Harvey gave Madge and Morris to understand that when they had opened up one or two more of the veins that the men were steadily working at, the value of the ore would be such that there would no doubt be the wildest scramble among the speculators to purchase the stock. Morris listened to all that Ben and Harvey had to say, but with him it was the hardest part he had played in many years. He knew that Harvey and he were on

about the same footing as regards the respective ability of each when it came to the knowledge of mining. He was posing as a sight-seer, and while appearing as such, was almost afraid to speak for fear he should betray his knowledge. When Ben was proudly holding forth the possibilities of the mine to Morris, Harvey would look at Morris in such a manner as if to say :

"I wonder if this fellow is as green as he appears in reference to mining."

They were both playing their respective parts well, and when men are in such a position, they are always more or less suspicious. At last Morris said :

"Madge, I think we have seen enough ; I am getting very tired."

This being the cue for Madge, she turned to Harvey, saying :

"Won't you get me a small piece of quartz to take back to Chicago with me, Mr. Harvey? As Mr. Morris is tired, I'm afraid that we'll have to give up any further explorations. I'm sure," continued she, "that it must be very trying for men to have to work in such a damp place, Mr. Harvey."

"Not at all, Miss Malcom ; they get used to it and don't mind it in the least."

"There is one thing certain, Mr. Harvey, I know they have a good master."

Harvey smiled.

Old Ben and Morris had been standing a little apart gossiping about the mine ; and Harvey having signaled for the cage, they all ascended and went direct to the office.

"Well !" exclaimed Harvey. "How did you like your visit to the underground world, Miss Malcom?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Madge, "I think it was just delightful. It was such a novelty, and I shall never get over telling my friends what I saw, and how I felt in the bowels of the earth."

"I'm very glad you enjoyed it."

"Enjoyed it? I should say I did, and I thank you ever so much, Mr. Harvey."

"How did you like it, Mr. Morris?"

"It was all very wonderful, Mr. Harvey, but I would not care to undertake another trip; but like Madge, I am glad I can say I've been down in a gold mine. It seemed so enchanting to see the men dig that for which all the people seem to be fighting. Do you know, Mr. Harvey, while I was down there, for the time being, the gold seemed to have lost its value for me; it didn't seem possible that this was the treasure that everybody handles with such care, and misers fondle as if it were a god, and over which people quarrel with their best friends and relatives, even going so far at times as to murder for its possession. Then, for the first time in my life, it dawned upon me that this gold that we worship was being handled with pick and shovel. I thought, too, that if the whole mountain was one mass of solid gold, it could not of itself extend to me one moment's pleasure. A single pressure of the hand; one look from the eye of the person we love; one kind word from a noble man or woman, should be worth more to us than all the gold we can hoard; and here we are, all our lives, from the cradle to the grave, striving to amass this cold, inanimate metal. We sacrifice our best friends; we lose our self-respect; and the majority of us go to early graves for the possession of it. No, Mr. Har-

vey, I shall never again have the same idea of gold that I had before I went down into your mine."

"Every word you have said, Mr. Morris, is true, and many a time when I have been working night and day, not allowing any of the miners, except one or two that I could trust, to see the richness of the new strike I was opening up, I have thought over the same ideas. I have sat down on a powder keg after a new vein had been discovered, and thought to myself that a good woman's love and a cheery fireside were worth more than all the gold in the mine; but I'm afraid that things will go on as they are, Mr. Morris, and that there always will be the same struggle to obtain the gold as there is at the present time."

"Yes, you're right there, Mr. Harvey. As long as there is aristocracy to set the fashions; and royalty with its train of satellites; in fact, as long as the civilized world continues as it is to-day there will be the same maddening rush for gold."

"Well, I declare, Mr. Harvey, if you and Mr. Morris haven't missed your calling, I'll give up. My, but you both talk like parsons, and I'm afraid you'll convert me if I stay to listen to any more of this sermonizing."

"There's no danger.—eh, Harvey? Why, if it were not for the dear ladies who adore finery to such a degree, that the men, knowing their weakness, are always striving to supply their wants, I'm sure they wouldn't put such a value on gold as they do. Isn't that so, Harvey?"

Harvey laughed good-naturedly, being afraid to commit himself in Madge's presence.

"I think you are very unkind and unjust to the

ladies. How different you are from Mr. Harvey, who expressed himself by saying that a woman's love was worth more than all the gold in the mine."

"Possibly Mr. Harvey's love affairs have always run smoothly."

"Now, Mr. Harvey, we have him. Come, tell us, Mr. Morris, all about the lady that jilted you."

At this sally of Madge's they all joined in an outburst of laughter which thoroughly amused Harvey.

"I never believed in resurrecting the dead, Madge," replied Morris.

"Then the lady is dead?"

"Why, Madge, how persistent you are; I never said such a thing."

"You said you did not believe in resurrecting the dead."

"But I meant it in a different light."

"Then there are two kinds of dead. Ah! now I know, Mr. Morris, you mean your love is dead."

"Madge! Madge! I think you are dreadful. Come, Mr. Harvey, help me out with this young lady."

This mimic battle between Madge and Morris amused Harvey very much, and greatly helped to break down the barrier that he supposed existed between them socially, and as they moved on in the direction of the shops, he lost, to a certain extent, the restraint he had been under while in their presence.

"Now, Mr. Morris, if you are not too fatigued, I'll show you through the various shops; you can then watch the progress of the ore as it leaves the mine until it comes out of the assaying room in bars of gold."

"I shall be delighted, Mr. Harvey, as it will not be so trying, I suppose, as down in the mine."



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Harvey, having dismissed suspicion entirely from his mind, showed the working of the ore until it came out in bullion.

Morris and Madge expressed themselves at the wonder of it all, and while Morris congratulated Harvey on that which to him seemed so perfect a construction of the mine, Madge equally expressed herself at Harvey's great responsibility in managing such a stupendous undertaking.

The bubble had been pricked. Woman had triumphed and won a victory over the shrewdest of men. The plotters had put their scheme through without a hitch. They had won at every stage of the game. Once more a man whom no other could bribe or in any way hoodwink had been fooled by a woman. This goddess that Harvey was worshipping had, at the first attempt, even before a gun was fired, compelled the general to lay down his arms in an unconditional surrender.



CHAPTER XLIX.

IF YOU'LL wait a few minutes, Mr. Morris, I'll accompany you; we have plenty of time to get to the station before the train starts."

"Both Madge and I should be glad of your company, Mr. Harvey, but I hope you are not neglecting your business on our account."

"Not at all, Mr. Morris. I have straightened up everything for the night, and am perfectly at liberty until to-morrow."

"In that case we can all go back to the city and take dinner together," replied Morris.

Madge was making the play of her life to catch Harvey, and told him with the most winsome of smiles that she was so glad he was coming with them, and asked him if he would please hold her jacket while she put it on. It was the lightest task that Harvey had possibly ever undertaken; but he held it with as firm a grip as if it weighed a ton.

"Thank you ever so much, Mr. Harvey."

Harvey's big smile spoke more than words at the pleasure it gave him to be in any way useful to her.

Madge, on entering the car, seated herself beside Harvey, and the other seats nearby being occupied, necessitated Morris moving farther down the car.

"I see, Madge, you've thrown me over entirely," said Morris as he moved away.

Harvey blushed at Morris' remark, but was soon absorbed in a multiplicity of questions Madge asked.

Arriving at the hotel, Meek, who had been anxiously waiting their return, was surprised at the appearance of Harvey.

"Oh, you've missed half your life, uncle!" exclaimed Madge, "and Mr. Harvey has been kindness itself—hasn't he, Mr. Morris?"

"Mr. Harvey certainly did all that any one could have done to make our trip pleasant, Madge, I'm sure; but James, you ought to have seen Madge in the car on our return; she threw me over completely; yes, she and Harvey were chattering like two school girls, while your humble servant was left out in the cold."

"You men are all the same; just because Mr. Harvey is a little more considerate, you get jealous."

"Don't mind him, Madge," replied Meek, "he is only trying to tease you."

Harvey had asked Madge when in the train, whether she thought her uncle would allow her to accompany him to the theatre, and if she would like to go.

"I certainly should be delighted to accompany you, Mr. Harvey, and don't believe my uncle will have any objections whatever."

"I'll ask him then, as soon as we have dined," replied Harvey.

"What's the verdict, Mr. Harvey, has his highness refused his permission?" asked Madge of Harvey after dinner.

"Oh! These girls, Mr. Harvey. Here she has been getting ready, knowing how little my power is over her. I shall tell, Madge, when I get back to Chicago, about your Denver beau. You had better get on the right side of her mother, Mr. Harvey, then you'll have clear sailing."

"I'm ready now," exclaimed Madge, in a slightly gushing manner as she approached Harvey.

Harvey was too pleased, and at the same time too much embarrassed, to risk a reply to Madge as she advanced towards him; but as they walked down the corridor of the hotel, she having taken his arm, he would not have changed places with any human being.

"In a scheme like this, Morris, that girl is worth her weight in gold."

"You certainly would have had a hard time getting the information without her."

"Get it?" replied Meek. "Why, Morris, I never could have procured it without her aid, and if we win out in this deal, I'll see she is well staked."

"She certainly deserves it, Meek," answered Morris.

"Now, Morris, the coast is clear."

Getting a pad and sharpening his pencil, Meek said:

"Fire away, Morris, all you've found out."

"Let us talk it over first, Meek."

"One word, Morris; I can never stand the suspense while you go into details; tell me in a word, first, then you can give me the details later. Is it a bonanza, or are they working it for the market?"

"Working it for the market, Meek. They are losing money by operating it."

Meek did not answer, but walked rapidly up and down the room. It was very evident that he was strongly affected by the news. If the mine had been a bonanza, he would have urged Madge to marry Harvey, which would not have been a hard proposition, as she was ready to marry him or any one else, providing he had enough money. He could also have specu-

lated in some shares, and been comfortable for the rest of his life.

"That part of the program is all off now," said he to himself. He had been on the verge of making his fortune so often that the bright visions were thrown to the winds, and like the medicine he was in the habit of taking, he gulped it down, saying it was a bitter dose, but the sooner swallowed the better.

"You're sure there's no possibility of your being mistaken, Morris?"

"A man with half an eye can see that the mine is being worked for the market. In my opinion, Meek, that mine is full of water, except the first three floors, although the pumps have been going night and day."

"I think, Morris, that the best thing for me to do under the circumstances is to wire Todd in cipher that 'she is a dead one,' and ask him if you had not better return at once to New York."

He had just returned from the telegraph office, when in walked Harvey and Madge.

"Back already! Great Scott!" exclaimed Meek. "Is it that late? Well, how did you enjoy the play, Mr. Harvey?"

"I never enjoyed anything so much in my life," replied Harvey.

"I'm angry at you, uncle; you never asked me how I enjoyed it."

"Girls always enjoy plays, don't they, Mr. Harvey?"

"I've always heard they did, Mr. Meek."

"Don't go yet, Mr. Harvey; have a glass of wine and light a cigar; Mr. Morris has received a dispatch from Chicago and may have to leave to-morrow."

"Nothing serious, I hope, Mr. Morris."

"It may be very serious, Mr. Harvey. My nephew has met with an accident, and they have taken him to the hospital. I have wired for particulars and the doctor's report; I will then know better what to do."

"Well, gentlemen, it's getting late; I'll say good-night and good-bye, Mr. Morris, if I don't see you again."

"Good-night, Mr. Harvey," from Meek and Morris.

Madge assisted Harvey with his coat and walked with him to the elevator, where she bade him good-night, with just enough pressure in her handshake to make the blood tingle in his veins. Harvey returned her warm adieu and promised to be down in a day or two.

"We can't do anything until we hear from Todd?" queried Morris.

"Nothing at all," replied Meek.

"Then I'll bid you good-night; in the morning we may hear from him."

When Morris left the room Meek addressed Madge as follows:

"Madge, there's a possibility of us having to get out of here within the next forty-eight hours, and if you have any irons in the fire you had better mold them into shape while they are hot."

"Is it necessary that we should leave in such haste?" queried she.

"Morris will most likely leave to-morrow, and I'll stay a day or two if you have any cards to play with Harvey."

"If I were sure Harvey had money enough, I'd set my cap for him."

"Well, you burnt your fingers once—better go slow."

"Go slow, did you say? There's no danger, uncle. My heart shall be as the North Pole, to be warmed only by the sun God of Gold."

"Have you written to your mother?"

"No."

"Write her to-morrow, and tell her you may be back in a day or two; also tell her if I have time to spare I'll call on my way back to New York. Did you hear what I said, Madge?"

"Yes, I heard you."

"Now, if you'll retire to your room, I'll go to bed."

"Uncle, you're like all the men; after you have asked all the questions you wish to know, you order me out of the room—you can't help it; it's your nature; all men are selfish, selfish, selfish."

"Now, now, now, have a good night's rest, and see me in the morning. Good-night, good-night," said Meek, as Madge left the room in a disgruntled manner.

Closing the door after Madge had retired, Meek, musing to himself, said:

"There is one of two things to decide in the case of a woman. If you have a disagreement with her, get her out of the room as quickly as you can; if she won't go, then you leave; don't stop to argue with her; if you do, you're lost."

When Meek's message was delivered to Todd at his club, the latter wired Morris to come on to New York and for Meek to wait for a letter.

That night Madge matured her plans to try if possible to wheedle some money from Harvey.

"He told me," she mused, "that he had no friends in the world, and no one to look after but himself—that's too bad—he should have—and I'll grant him the special privilege of looking after me. It may not be the proper thing to wheedle money out of him, but if I can do it, I can ease my conscience by accepting it as his possible wife; which I am willing to be, providing he has money enough. I could have all my own way with him—that's sure."

Madge had sent a letter to a friend of hers in Chicago, enclosing another addressed to herself in Denver. The contents of the letter, which she was to pass off as having been written by her mother, was to the effect that the mortgage on their home had fallen due. It stated that the parties who were carrying the mortgage would not renew it unless it was reduced a thousand dollars, as the amount they had loaned was more than they cared to carry on account of the property having deteriorated since the loan was made; and Madge was to ask her uncle if he would save the old homestead. Madge's mother knew absolutely nothing of this little scheme of her daughter's. Madge, since her evolution from "Poverty Hollow" (as she called the place where her parents rescued her from the degradation and poverty she was enduring at the time she was living with her husband), had gradually but surely come to that stage where she realized to the fullest extent the magic power of gold. It was the magician's wand; the open sesame to everything. There had been times when she was undergoing the pangs of hunger in "Poverty Hollow," that if she could then have procured a few dollars to provide the most meager necessities of life, she would have been perfectly happy.



But now that she had all these necessities provided for, there was a power, more potent, driving her on. It was Vanity—that insatiate monster, never appeased. Yes, every move from the first day we enter school to our last dying breath, our lives are ruled by it. “Let the sea be ever so deep, and hell still deeper—yet pride is deeper still.”

But we have digressed, and must now go back to the little adventuress and follow her in her scheme to inveigle money out of the old bachelor, Harvey.

She conned and planned, then mused :

“If I can get the money from him, I don’t see how I am going to be found out. I can twist the matter around my little finger, and she must act and say just what I tell her. If Harvey comes to Chicago and finds us living in a flat—why, the paternal home was too large to keep up after the death of father, and we were obliged to rent it. I think a story like this would be credited. However, I must try all in my power to get the money. In the meantime, if I find that Mr. Harvey’s bank account is large enough to make him a desirable catch, I’ll take him for better or—no, no! Not any worse!”

The demon god, Vanity, now had control of Madge, body and soul, and was fast driving her on to the pit-falls of hell.



CHAPTER L.

AT a certain hour each day, the time when Harvey usually called, could we have caught a glimpse of Madge we should have seen a girl with the most bewitching of house costumes, girdled at the waist with a becoming sash just tight enough to throw out the lines of her graceful and well-rounded bosom; while the rest of her drapery clung to her sylph-like form in such a manner as to give her the most ravishing kind of beauty—the kind which attracts and incenses men of strong passions. This woman knew men, and in an adroit way played her part to arouse their passion to such a degree that for the time being they were ready to be molded into any form she chose.

The part Madge was about to play she had rehearsed many times, until she could now go through with it without a hitch, and was eagerly awaiting her prey to come and bask in the sunshine of her charms; then as he slowly sipped the sweetness of her honeyed words, would she spring the trap she had set for him.

On the third day after his trip to the theater with Madge, Harvey arrived at the hotel. Meek had told him not to stand on ceremony; that whenever he was in Denver to come directly to their rooms.

Purchasing a few choice cigars, Harvey at once took the elevator to Meek's room. After knocking on the door, a voice called "Come in," which seemed to Harvey the sweetest music he had ever heard.

As he entered the room Madge raised her head from



the table and appeared greatly shocked and embarrassed at being caught in such a predicament.

She appeared the most abject picture of despair; and as she raised her head, the tears refusing to be held back, rolled down her cheeks.

With the air of wishing to hide her appearance, having uttered a "Good morning" in her assumed embarrassment, and having momentarily mislaid her handkerchief (purposely), the tears still rolling down her cheeks added to her discomfiture as she attempted to wipe her eyes with her hands; not succeeding, she, as with mortification at her appearance, once more buried her head in her hands and commenced to sob violently.

Harvey was almost unmanned at her appearance. He did not mind how men suffered; but women and children were different; he classed them all alike as wanting the care of the sterner sex.

With mingled thoughts of pity and love he gazed upon her. She had never appeared to him so ravishingly lovable as at this moment. In her utter abandonment, as it were, with the top button of her dress open, giving a view of her graceful neck, with a faint outline of her bosom—this, with her luxuriant hair hanging in wild profusion over her well-rounded shoulders—added to her an extra charm.

He took it for granted that if she had known who it was that knocked at the door, she would never have admitted him. He was so full of sympathy that he was afraid to disturb her in her present grief; and was waiting very patiently for her to raise her head so that he could apologize and leave the room.

In a few moments she did so, and looking at him with an expression of mortification at being seen in

such a pitiable and unpresentable condition, begged he would excuse her appearance.

"Don't mention it, please, Miss Malcom; I can assure you I am very, very sorry to see you in such trouble, and would not for the world have entered the room had I any idea I was intruding."

"When you knocked, Mr. Harvey, I thought it was the maid returning, as she only left a moment before; but there is no harm, as I am sure after all you have done for me—there is no gentleman (here she paused) who could be so considerate and kind as you. I am sorry to have met you in my present condition; but I know you will dismiss it from your mind, like the good, kind friend you are."

"Before I go, Miss Malcom, if there is anything in the world that I can do for you, I'll do it, no matter what the cost or hazard."

"Mr. Harvey, you're too kind—oh, that I were a man, that I might work and earn money—then it would be different."

"Why not place your confidence in me, Miss Malcom? You say you wished you were a man that you might earn money; if it's only a question of money, as I have stated, I have no one depending on me, and if all the money I have in the world would be of any service to you, you are as welcome to it as the flowers in May; so cheer up, and the greatest blessing you can confer on your old friend is to put your trust in him and allow him to share your trouble."

"Mr. Harvey, Mr. Harvey, this can never be. What would mother say? But as you have been so candid with me, I'll be the same with you," and handing him the letter, between sobs, she said:

"I'm sure it will kill mamma, if we lose our home."

Harvey slowly read the letter, then arose from his chair, and going over to Madge, patted her on the back in a fatherly manner, saying:

"Don't worry another minute. I'll give you the money to send to your mother, and no one will ever be the wiser."

"I can't take it! I can't take it, Mr. Harvey."

"Tut, tut, tut, nonsense," exclaimed Harvey. "You must take it and stop the old woman—(pardon me, Miss Malcom, I mean your mother)—from worrying through fear of losing her home."

"My uncle paid the mortgage off once, and said at the time if it was mortgaged again he would not help us; but he does not know what mother had to contend with during the long illness of father, and I would rather die, Mr. Harvey, than ask him to pay it off again."

"My dear Miss Malcom, please don't trouble yourself about the money; I have gambled away many a thousand dollars during my life, and never thought twice about it after it was gone, and if Harvey can't loan or give a young lady anything that is in his power to help her when she is down on her luck, then all I can say is, that he is not the same Harvey of camp days, when pals shared their last dollar, and I consider you the greatest little pal I ever met in my life. I hope you will excuse an old miner for using such language, but I always like to be plain in these little affairs."

"That's just like you, Mr. Harvey, to talk in such a kind way. You are so big and strong, and in a few gentle words after taking the greatest burden off my mother's heart, you call it a little affair. Some men, Mr.

Harvey, would see us go to the poorhouse for one-third the amount, and if you will only tell me what I can do to repay you this kindness, all you have to do is to say the word. You see, I am using some of your own words. You mining men are so genuine; no beating about the bush; you are worth a hundred of the so-called society people; and I shall never forget you, Mr. Harvey, as long as I live."

Harvey told Madge that he would run down the next day with the money, and as he appeared ready to go she arose from her chair. Taking his hand in hers, and resting the other on his shoulder, her head slightly bent and almost touching his bosom, in a very good imitation of suppressed emotion, which was tinged (for the time being, at least) with some sincerity on account of Harvey's great generosity, she then realized that which every woman loves—to be loved—and it was plain to Madge that Harvey dearly loved her. As the pressure of her hand tightened, and her head bent a shade lower, Harvey could feel the throbbing of her bosom as he heard the words:

"You shall have this money back, Mr. Harvey; yes, to the last cent."

Harvey never realized how he did it—but kiss her he did, and seizing his hat hurried from the room with as much haste as he usually did when he applied the fuse to one of the dynamite charges in the mine, nor did he regain his composure until after he had been seated in the café for some time, where he topped off one or two "bracers," as he called them; then having lit a cigar, he began to think over the progress he was making with the little adventuress.

"She's a little fairy, and it looks as if I had a chance. I don't see why I shouldn't ask her. There is plenty of time, however, and I seem to be making better headway each time I visit her."

When Meek arrived, Madge told him that Harvey had called, and that he was coming again on the morrow.

"It looks, Madge, as if we should have to leave. I expect word from New York by next mail to that effect. How are you and Harvey getting along?"

"I guess I have him 'hooked' as you call it, but am afraid of going any further in the matter. As I told you before, I've had all the married life I want, and should I venture again, I must be assured that the party, as you aptly put it, has the necessary qualifications of pecuniary standing. I want money, as I want to see the world, and the sunny side of it. I've had enough of the shady."

"You're all right, Madge, I don't blame you in the least, and I'm confident you'll land the right party yet. You've convinced me of one thing, and that is, you don't require any assistance after you've been introduced to the gentleman; of that I'm sure."

"You flatter me, uncle."

The following day Meek received a letter with a draft on a Denver bank, thanking him for the adroit manner in which he had procured the information, telling him that they were not quite ready to bear the stock, but that he had better make preparations to leave in a hurry.

"I beg of you not to think of going away for a few days, uncle. What would Mr. Harvey think of your departure after the visit to the mine?"

"I can't stay here to oblige Mr. Harvey, and if you have any wires to pull, you had better get them straightened out at once."

The day after the arrival of the letter from Todd to Meek, Harvey brought the money to Madge. Meek suspected that Madge was cajoling Harvey out of something in the line of money or jewelry, and not wishing to stand in her way, decided to be absent when Harvey arrived.

That night Harvey had the pleasure of taking Madge in to dinner alone, and after dinner was over he suggested a walk, to which Madge gladly assented. As they proceeded on their walk, she gave Harvey her Chicago address, telling him that she did not know how much longer they would remain in Denver, as her uncle ought to be back in Chicago to attend to some business which was very pressing and would not brook delay.

She wrote another letter to her friend in Chicago, enclosing one addressed to Harvey, which ostensibly came from her mother, thanking him for his great kindness to a stranger; calling him their savior in distress, and saying that the money would be refunded in the shortest possible time. It also stated that she hoped Mr. Harvey would pay them a visit during the fall, when she and her daughter would leave no stone unturned to make it one of the most pleasant in his life; and if he ever sold out his interest in the mine, she hoped he would come to Chicago and make his home with them. When she wrote this letter Madge thought that if Harvey came to Chicago, there might be a possibility of transferring his affections to her mother.

When Harvey received this letter supposed to have

been sent by Madge's mother, he was greatly elated. As he perused the contents he paused as he mused, saying:

"Just like her daughter! What a good, kind soul she must be. Yes, I'll certainly pay them a visit, and if I pull out of this affair as much as I expect, I won't want a second invitation to settle down as she suggests. I'll bet the old lady is a rare good one, judging by the kind letter she has written me."

The following day Meek received a cipher dispatch, stating that the forces on both sides of the Atlantic were to be ready on a certain day to bear Jack-Pot stock, and that he had better return to New York at once.

That night Meek imparted the news to Madge that he would leave Denver on the following Monday. Harvey, being informed, came to Denver and spent the evening playing billiards with Meek. He intended to stay over Sunday and see them off on Monday morning. Madge, to make a good impression, insisted that her uncle, Mr. Harvey and she, should attend church on Sunday morning. Meek would fain have uttered a groan, but suppressed it in the presence of Harvey, and acquiescing in the most graceful manner, said that he always wished for Sunday to come around, as he felt so much more contented after listening to a good sermon.

The old hypocrite had no intention whatever of attending church.

This church party that Madge had arranged gave Harvey more uneasiness than anything that had occurred since he became acquainted with her. He had

no serious objections to attending the place of worship; but his vision depicted Madge marching him down the aisle of the church—possibly close to the pulpit—where, in his vivid imagination, everybody would be gazing at him. However, she was going and had asked him to accompany her and her uncle. He was in that state where a good woman could lead him into doing anything. He was full to overflowing with the subtle power, love, which tames our natures and makes us see the better side of life, showing the divine power in all its greatness, and in an ecstasy cry out for all the gladness that God has showered upon us.

Harvey was up bright and early on the Sabbath, and at the appointed time, silk hat in hand, appeared at Meek's door.

"Good morning, Mr. Harvey, how are you?"

"Never felt better, Mr. Meek."

"I wish I could say the same. Take a seat, Mr. Harvey, Madge will be in directly. I'm afraid, Mr. Harvey, you'll have to excuse me from attending church this morning."

"I'm sorry you can't come along. Is your cold very bad, Mr. Meek?"

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Harvey, and I don't wish to annoy the congregation by a violent fit of coughing in the middle of the sermon."

At this moment Madge appeared with all her finery showing to the best advantage.

"Good morning, Mr. Harvey; isn't it too bad uncle can't attend church?"

"Yes, indeed, I'm very sorry," replied Harvey.

"If you only knew how he enjoys church, Mr. Harvey, I know you'd be sorry for him."

There is a little selfishness in all our natures, and no one could have depicted any sorrow in Harvey's countenance when he heard Meek's cough was such as to prevent him from joining them.

Harvey with stately tread attended Madge to church, and came out of the ordeal with flying colors. While holding half of the hymn-book, he smiled as he noticed his capacious hand alongside of hers, which he greatly admired.

The following day Harvey was at the depot to bid Madge and her uncle good-bye. The thousand dollars, and the kiss he gave her the same evening, had removed the first barrier in his courtship, and she having told him to call her Madge, explained in an adroit manner that while they had not been acquainted very long, she did not know how it was, but he seemed already an old friend, and one to be trusted.

Meek having purchased the tickets and checked the baggage, sauntered up and down the platform, leaving Harvey and Madge holding an animated conversation, which gradually assumed a more serious turn, at least with Harvey, judging by his countenance.

As the train that was to bear them away drew up at the platform, Meek gave Harvey a hearty shake of the hand, then sauntered towards the car, leaving Harvey holding Madge's hand as she said:

"Don't disappoint us, whatever you do, Mr. Harvey, and write as often as you can; I shall always be looking forward to the pleasure I shall have in answering your letters"—she kissed him and was gone.

Harvey was so much embarrassed at Madge kissing him in public that he forgot a basket of fruit he had

purchased for her, and which a small boy was holding in the background.

Giving the boy a tip, he was about to tell him to keep the fruit; but like all of Harvey's presents, it was not done by halves, and was rather large. Telling the boy to follow him, he retraced his steps to the depot, and expressed the fruit to Madge's Chicago residence; then took the next train for Black Hawk.



CHAPTER LI.

TODD had cabled to 'Turn in Liverpool the exact information about the mine, and for 'Turn to wait for a letter, as it contained full instructions about a plan he had formed for him to work in conjunction with the New York syndicate.

The steamer carrying Todd's letter arrived in the Mersey on Friday night; Dempsey being in 'Turn's office when the mail was delivered on Saturday morning.

"Well, what do you say it is, Dempsey, before I open it?"

"Oh, damn it, open it; don't keep me here sweating blood!" exclaimed Dempsey.

"Read for yourself, Dempsey."

Dempsey adjusted his glasses and read the letter.

"That Todd's a shrewd one, he knows his business. What do you think of his plan?"

"Can't be beat, in my opinion, Dempsey. It's the only way to work the market; that is, have both ends of the cable denoting the fall in prices; then the lambs and the professionals will both get in the game. We had better marshal our forces and be ready when Todd makes his raid on the New York Stock Exchange. We ought to write an article to be inserted in the papers Monday, stating the full particulars as Todd has sent them; that will help to start the ball rolling, and substantiate the reports that we'll circulate."

"All right, 'Turn, send in the report to the papers,

and I'll tip everybody that I think has the nerve to sell the stock short. She'll come a sailing down the toboggan slide and that d——d cuss, Robinson, and all his parasites will creep into their holes and never be heard of again. Yes, 'Turn, that's what I want, damn them; wiped out, every mother's son of them."

"Don't worry, Dempsey, they'll never know what struck them when the battle is over; it will be short and sweet."

When the market opened, the Dempsey faction were resting on their arms waiting for the signal to attack the stock; which, under some commission house buying, and some belated shorts who were covering, kept the price steady; and as more commission house orders came in, sent it up half a point.

When the commission house buying had ceased, and the stock still remained steady, the room traders who are about the best judges in irregular stocks, renewed their efforts to depress and sell Jack-Pot; not getting any buyers, they began to offer the stock cheaper than the demand for it warranted. This was a favorite trick of theirs, offering to sell a thousand shares lower than people were willing to pay, with a view to frightening holders of the stock, until by doing so they created a panic. Slowly the stock was being hammered down. If the bears had a good leader, now was the time for him to take hold.

At this time, by a preconcerted signal from 'Turn, there was hurled on the market thousands of shares of Jack-Pot stock. Under this heavy selling the stock slowly but surely receded, and when 'Turn began to offer the stock in thousand share blocks, there was a panic.



'Turn was a past master at "bearing" stock, and not giving the bulls time to get their breath, made the wildest onslaught in his attempt to make the panic general. At this juncture, the small holders, thinking they would be wiped out entirely, sent in their orders to sell; these orders came in so fast that the brokers were like so many wild men, trying to keep up with them. At the height of the bear raid the ticker reported panic on the New York Stock Exchange in Jack-Pot stock, the mine reported flooded. The cry became general, and at every broker's office in Liverpool the telephones were ringing, their customers sending in orders to sell their Jack-Pot stock. Yes, one and all who were holding Jack-Pot wanted to realize; better to take what they could get than hold on to worthless stock. Under the heavy selling the market reeled and staggered like a ship dismasted in the trough of the sea. The stock went down every minute. People who did not or could not sell their stock slept little that night; others went to the residences of their brokers to talk over the situation and get their advice. It was very evident the battle would be renewed the next day, as Dempsey was a remorseless enemy and would not stop until, if it lay in his power, he had made good his boast that he would make a pauper of Robinson.

Royal and his partners were in a dilemma as to the great bear raid on the stock in the Liverpool, London and New York markets. It was very evident that it was a prearranged affair; but he was determined to meet it. He went to the English agents of certain stockbrokers, ordering them to buy to the limit.

That same night, Robinson held a meeting with some of the best people who had money to invest, and a pool was formed to buy all of the stock that was offered the next day. Robinson knew from what quarter the great bear raid had started, and was equally as determined as Dempsey when it came to a case of plunging. The best move that Robinson made was to go with a check for a large amount to one of the best known and most conservative firms of brokers in the city of Liverpool. This firm was known as one that never undertook any small accounts, and never bought or sold except on orders from investors; and whenever they appeared on 'change it was always taken for granted that they had the right information, and no matter which way the market went at the time, it always ended in their favor, for the reason that they were legitimate buyers, and bought according to value, which, like running water, always finds its level.

Royal had found out through his agent in Liverpool who it was that was helping him to keep up the price of the stock, and cabled Robinson through his brokers that he would meet all of the bear attacks, and assured him that he need not be afraid, but to keep right on buying, as he would come out all right in the end.

In New York it was Todd and his associates against Royal and his gang. In Liverpool it was Robinson and the English firm acting for Royal, against Dempsey and his followers.

The battle opened strong the next day, the Dempsey crowd being on hand more determined than ever. 'Turn led them with rapid selling of the stock, and when the tape denoted a drop of one point in the selling there would be a war-whoop from the bear side.



AN ANGLO-AMERICAN STORY 209

At this time Royal and his brokers in New York, knowing full well what effect the London and Liverpool markets would have on the New York Stock Exchange, sent in orders to buy as fast as Todd and his associates sold. For two hours the heavy selling and the unlimited buying kept the price very even; the factions were about equally divided.

At the height of the panic the Liverpool ticker recorded heavy buying on the New York exchange of Jack-Pot stock. This news strengthened the market. Then, taking advantage of the strong support of the New York market, Robinson's brokers vied with the Liverpool brokers of Royal's, and the stock advanced one point. At this stage of the battle the conservative firm of brokers again came into the fray, and the band of bullwhackers combining their forces sent the stock up by bounds.

The public allowed others to do their thinking; they did not stop to investigate, but followed blindly the quotation figures on the ticker. A few hours had changed their minds. Their eyes were now dazzled with the vast wealth Robinson had made. Orders poured into the brokers' office by telegraph, telephone and mail. Yes, they all wanted to buy Jack-Pot. It was Jack-Pot, nothing but Jack-Pot. They were now Jack-Pot mad. This was not merely a defeat for the bears; it was a rout; they were annihilated. There was the wildest rush to cover among the regular traders.

When 'Turn, Dempsey's broker, refused to go any further in the mad attempt to bear the stock in the face of inevitable ruin, Dempsey lost control of himself entirely. He insulted 'Turn, and at once went to other

brokers; but the gossip of the street that he was a ruined man was there before him. The great awe that he had created all his life with his inferiors vanished as if by magic. In its place there was a certain air of half pity and contempt, as his arrogance had always tended to make him enemies. When the truth of the enormous losses that Dempsey had incurred dawned upon the people with whom he had been doing business, they in their haste to get a settlement from him were the means of bringing on the total collapse of the firm of Dempsey & Co.

The evening papers stated that a prominent firm of cotton brokers had been caught in the Jack-Pot deal, and were on the wrong side of the market to the tune of a million. This and other notices of like effect were all known to mean the firm of Dempsey & Co.

Dempsey had not been at his residence during this last raid on the stock, and for the greater part of the time had been under the influence of liquor. Incredible as it may seem, the great luminaries, the nabobs of the wealthy business circles, had in this short space of time deserted Dempsey; and now when he was going from office to office, and they saw him coming, the clerks were told to say that their chiefs were engaged or out. The consequence was that the secondary lights, whom Dempsey a few days previous would have ignored, were now tagging around with him, while he, under the influence of Bacchus, might be seen at different cafes, surrounded by these satellites, who were pleased to listen (while Dempsey was paying for the wine), how he was going to make a pauper of Robinson; and when he reached the maudlin state of inebriety, put him into a cab and took him to his temporary quarters at the Adelphi Hotel.



AN ANGLO-AMERICAN STORY 211

The bigoted, narrow-minded, selfish and mean-spirited Dempsey, instead of bringing Robinson down from his lofty perch, as it had been his wont to say, had been nicely placed in the grave he had dug for his intended victim. He had made his boasts in business circles after Robinson had beat him in his first Jack-Pot stock deal, that when he got through with him, Robinson would be too dead to skin. "I won't leave him with a stiver, damn him!" he had exclaimed time and again.

All his life this man had had things pretty much his own way. He was always watching for a chance, no matter how mean and despicable the transaction might be, to get the better of his fellow man. During his long business career he had never met with a setback; nor had he ever been known to do anything that would jeopardize his financial standing. He had often made his boasts that he would not endorse any man's note; no, by gad, not for Rothschild himself.

Like all men of low nature, the one absorbing thought that now never left him for a moment, was revenge. His hatred for Robinson was as a smouldering fire, bursting into flame each time he thought of him, the noxious gases here being thrown off as he, in his rage, cursed his brother-in-law. All his bombastic talk of how he had sworn to bring Robinson down from his lofty perch gradually dawned upon him. The men innumerable whom he had crushed in his business career were now reflected in a mirror before his eyes. The more he tried to realize his position, the worse it appeared. He was like a man drowning in an artificial pond, the wall surrounding

it being a few inches higher than he in his best efforts could grasp, and lined all around with people who were watching him in his frantic struggle for life. The people that surrounded this pond were the many whom he had trodden down that he might wallow in splendor. He looked around, but could see no sympathetic, helping hand. He felt as if he must die, and was ready now that all was lost, to meet death, if in his revenge he could drag Robinson down with him, so as to prevent leaving him behind to gloat over his downfall.

Robinson had been warned to be on the lookout for Dempsey, as he had not been at all careful whom he told that he was going to get square with him. Being of a kind disposition, and not wishing to cause any notoriety, and at the same time wishing to avoid a quarrel with his brother-in-law, Robinson passed the matter off lightly, and to those who insisted that Dempsey was really dangerous, said:

"He may threaten me, but I don't think he would do me any injury."



CHAPTER LII.

DEMPSEY was completely ruined ; everything that his creditors could seize was attached. It was only a question of a short time when his house and everything in it would be sold to meet his liabilities ; until the legal time had expired, he was allowed possession. His cowardly nature was such that he dare not remain in a sober state and face his ruin like a man ; but continued drinking heavily, and while under the influence of the false god Bacchus, he nursed the viper "revenge" to such an extent that if he had been a man of courage, there is not the least doubt he would have murdered several people whom he imagined had caused his downfall.

One night, Robinson, who was working in his den rather late, arranging some important matters, heard a ring at the front door-bell.

"Just see who it is," he called to the butler. When the butler opened the door, and before he had time to see who it was, he was pushed violently to one side, and in walked Dempsey, making with all haste for the study of Robinson. The butler was a small man of middle age, but not devoid of courage. He would have stopped Dempsey if he had had the strength ; but Dempsey being a large man, and such a "big gun" in the neighborhood, he stood somewhat in awe of him.

When Dempsey reached the study, Robinson raised his head to see who was coming, his countenance changing to blank despair when he saw the wild, haggard features of Dempsey.

"I've caught you at last, damn you! You've ruined me, James Robinson, but you'll never live to enjoy it."

Drawing a revolver as he spoke, and pointing it point-blank at Robinson's head, he was about to fire, when the little butler, with a spring like a jack rabbit, leaped on his back, the effect of which was to change the course of the bullet, which spent itself on the mirror over the mantel.

Robinson, who was pretty well scared, instantly dropped to the floor, and crawling on his hands and knees under the mahogany table, made his way in a crab-like fashion, but with all the speed his position would allow, to where Dempsey and the butler were struggling. The butler in his frantic efforts, had by mere chance accomplished what a man Dempsey's equal in weight might not have thought of. In his spring he had fastened both arms around Dempsey's neck, and being so much shorter, his feet did not touch the floor, his entire weight hanging on Dempsey's neck, almost choking him. This, with his wild, unearthly screams of "Help! Police! Murder!"—took all of Dempsey's attention.

As Robinson, holding on to Dempsey's legs, was about to raise himself, Dempsey lost his balance, carrying Robinson and the butler with him to the floor.

Dempsey, although generally spoken of as a powerful man, was like so many of our business men, in that he never took any exercise; the consequence was that in a few minutes he was breathless, and the two men had no difficulty in holding him until the arrival of the coachman and footman who had been aroused from their sleep by the violent ringing of their bell by Mrs. Robinson.



AN ANGLO-AMERICAN STORY 215

The scene which came very near being a tragedy had now turned to comedy. Mrs. Robinson by this time was in command of the household brigade, who, upon hearing the discharge of the revolver and the shrieking of the butler, had, in their haste, donned any and everything in the line of female wearing apparel; this, with their variegated colors and the fantastic manner in which the ladies and the servants wore them, was, to say the least, grotesque in the extreme.

Some of the ladies since the night previous seemed to have lost pounds of flesh, so shrunken did they appear, while others in the same time seemed to have grown to huge proportions—but the morrow, no doubt, would see them in their natural fairy-like forms.

When the coachman and the footman made their appearance, Robinson's place in holding down the prostrate Dempsey was taken by the coachman, while the footman, against the protests of Robinson, was sent with all haste for the police. He soon returned with two robust minions of the law, whom he found discussing some problem on one of the nearby corners.

Booking the details of the attempted tragedy, and taking possession of the revolver, the officers told the butler and the coachman to allow Dempsey to arise. It was very evident that Dempsey was stupid with liquor, and now that the tension he had been under had passed off, he was so utterly weak from the great nervous strain that he could hardly stand.

Robinson, who had had some hot words with his wife about sending for the police, went through the same proceedings with them when they arrived, but found that he could do nothing, as his wife insisted on Dempsey's arrest.

As the police were about to march Dempsey through the streets, Robinson ordered his groom to hitch up the team, and riding on the box, went with them to the town hall. Arriving there, he wanted to go on Dempsey's bail; but the sergeant told him it was too serious a charge. When the case came up the next day for a preliminary hearing, Preston, the magistrate, committed Dempsey to the Chester assizes, refusing Robinson's offer of bail.

The Chester assizes commenced the following week, and in less than two weeks after Dempsey had attempted the life of Robinson, he was convicted and sentenced to two years' imprisonment, which would have been ten, if Robinson had not perjured himself like a gentleman on Dempsey's behalf; besides procuring the best counsel in England to defend him. Robinson was severely lectured by the judge when it was apparent he was trying to defeat the ends of justice. If the police had not procured the pistol, which in the eyes of the English judge was looked upon as such a death-dealing weapon, and not with the same leniency as in America, the sentence would have been very light, and possibly an acquittal might have followed.



CHAPTER LIII.

THE Robinsons have arrived at the old baronial halls of the Dartmoors. On the third day after his arrival, Robinson received a telegram from his broker asking him to return to Liverpool without delay. We may rest assured, however, that Mrs. Robinson didn't lose any sleep over the abrupt departure of her husband, but at once made good her promise to some of the Oxtonians not to forget them when among the titled gentry. These letters, when they arrived with the crest and armorial bearings of the Dartmoors emblazoned thereon, still further enhanced the prestige which Mrs. Robinson was steadily gaining. How a few months at times change events. It is safe to say one year ago a letter from the Robinsons would have been destroyed as soon as read, and never by any chance mentioned to their friends, unless it were with a patronizing air; but now they were satisfied to be patronized by these selfsame Robinsons.

If we should for all time bear in mind the many snubs and meannesses we have received during our lives, and hold them in our breasts, rankling and nursing their cankerous growth, which condition of mind would undoubtedly reflect itself in our countenances, what horrid creatures we would appear.

Now that the ambition of Mrs. Robinson's was at last satisfied (if woman's ever is), how was it with her husband? In the business world he has risen to a higher position, if that were possible, than his wife has

in the social. With Robinson, however, the sudden accumulated wealth had not changed him a particle. He was the same Robinson, and could be approached by any one at all times. The generous way he acted in regard to Dempsey made him the talk of the town, and even those who never had a good word for any one could not help but admire the man.

Robinson's name was now on all the charitable lists; and while he was willing to subscribe, would have preferred doing so anonymously; but the recipients had already commenced to fawn on him, and with oily tongues and velvet-footed suavity, the goodly ministers, the agents for the societies for instructing and clothing the poor and forsaken tribes of God's creatures in the remote parts of the world, came to Robinson for aid.



CHAPTER LIV.

THE Saratoga season is in all its glory. The magnificent hotels are ablaze with splendor. Racing has commenced and the New York crowd has arrived. It has been a prosperous year in New York, and the great boom in stocks has made money for the majority of the people that usually spent part of the summer at the Spa. There are many gay parties assembled, but the party that are making their headquarters at the Grand Union are the gayest of the gay. At the races they are seen betting their money with reckless freedom. Their tally-ho coach and four which the leader of the party invariably drives, is the talk of Saratoga. The ladies who always accompany this party on their jaunts are equally notorious for their display of fine raiment. They are young and pretty, but no one can recognize any of New York's four hundred amongst them. It is very evident that the leader of this party has made up his mind that, come what may, they are all going to have a good time and one to be remembered. When they could gamble no more that day on the races, they would adjourn to the swell gambling resorts and play until the small hours of the morning. To inquiries as to who they were, the answer invariably was, "Wall Street men." Some one had started a rumor that they had cleaned up a million apiece on the "Street."

The leader of this gay party was none other than Royal, chief of the firm of Reed & Co.

Royal now for the first time began to think seriously

of the result when the mine was proved a fizzle. He had been forced to take a great many more people into his confidence than he had ever done before in any of his schemes; and he knew from his knowledge of human nature, that when the shoe pinched, and any of them were in danger of being brought to account, they would inform on him. He therefore made up his mind that at the first sign of danger he would join the foreign contingent of Uncle Sam's citizens, but before leaving the scenes of so many gay occasions, would give one more party and make it the gayest of all.

Royal's party having arrived at the race track in their tally-ho, the ladies adjourned to the grand stand and the gentlemen to the betting ring.

The bugle had sounded for the horses to go to the post, and as the starter with his assistants drove to the starting point, Royal, once more glancing at his card, noted the different weights that each horse had to carry, also their mounts; then decided to play Myth. It was only a selling race; but to the born gambler, one race is as good as another, so that he can get a bet down. Going down the line, the first bookmaker he came to was Jack McDonald.

"What are you laying against Myth, Jack?"

"Six to one."

"I'll bet you a thousand."

"All right, Mr. Ryalls," said the bookmaker; and as he passed down the line he placed with Mattie Looran, Snedicker, Ike Thompson, and several others, bets of from five hundred to a thousand apiece, and, as stated, the price being six to one, stood to win a small fortune.

Lighting a cigar as he left the betting ring, he made



his way to the ladies in the grand stand. Adjusting his field glasses, and scrutinizing the starters, he said :

"We'll have to wait some time for this start; there's that Flieshman cast-off, Wolhurst, won't face the barrier."

They say that "On the turf, and under the turf, all men are equal," and of a truth it's so. Elbowing, hobnobbing, then listening with rapt attention, might be seen well dressed men talking to touts, some of them the most forlorn looking creatures it was possible to behold. These men would place their money on the horses that these touts directed them to back, as they in race-track parlance figured it out how it was impossible for them to lose. To-day, they reasoned, this horse has ten pounds off since he last started, and in a better field than the one he is now to run against; also, he will now have a jockey on his back that is as good as five pounds off, intimating that the last time he started the jockey was a wooden man, and was only a hindrance to the horse.

"Get down on it," was the tout's last word, "and say, put a ten on for me—it's a cinch—it's just like finding money."

The rail-birds are all lined close against the fence, and after seeing the warming-up gallops of their favorites, put down their bets and once more resume their places. The next minute, like a clap of thunder, from fifteen thousand throats comes a mighty roar—"They're off!"

"False start; the flag hasn't dropped," said Royal.

"McCue, you're fined twenty-five; and you also, Maher—damn you, why don't you come on when I tell you? You spoiled that start; I'll fine you fifty next time," roared the starter.

When the starter's patience was almost exhausted, he caught them in line, sending them off to a beautiful start.

The first horse to poke its nose in front was Tyrshena, with McCue in the saddle; at the quarter it was Rare Perfume with Wolhurst running second. The same at the half. Going down the back stretch, Odom, who had the mount on Myth, crawled up on the leaders. At this point of the race, Danny Maher, who had been trailing with Knight of the Garter, came up with a rattle, and the three leaders made for the stretch neck-and-neck. As they made the turn into the stretch, Rare Perfume swung wide; Odom, taking a chance on this occurring, had eased his mount—falling back, and as Rare Perfume carried Knight of the Garter almost to the far side of the track, he like a flash brought Myth through on the rails, and when the other jockeys got their mounts straightened out, was two lengths in the lead. Odom knew he had a cripple under him, and nursing the old horse along, clucked and coaxed without touching him with whip or spur as he rode his hardest. Maher, riding a distance horse, got him straightened out and rode like a demon after Myth, being joined by Tyrshena, whom McCue was punishing in a frantic effort to overtake the leader. The crowd were on their feet; bedlam had broken loose. Inch by inch both Tyrshena and Knight of the Garter gained on Myth. Odom turned his head and saw them coming with two of the best jockeys in America on their backs, noted as they were for having no pity for their mounts when out to win; and watching them like a cat as they drove their spurs



and lashed their whips into the reeking flanks of their mounts, he sat down and rode the race of his life. A sixteenth from the wire they caught him, all three taking stride for stride,—noses apart.

It was plain to Odom that if he could not get one more spurt out the old horse the race was lost. He had not as yet touched his mount with whip or spur. The crucial point had arrived as the three horses approached the judges' stand head and head. Drawing his whip, Odom brought it down, swish, swish, on Myth's quivering flanks, as the three leaders, amidst the terrific din from the multitude, passed under the wire. Pandemonium reigned.

"Tyrshena wins—" "No, sir; it's Knight of the Garter!" "I tell you it's Myth!"

Everybody for the time being seemed to have lost their reason, except the old-time race-course habitués, who merely waited until the numbers went up. The finish was too close for any one to tell except the judges; and the crowd,—those who had wagered on the race,—held their breath as the winning numbers were hoisted.

"Winner, Myth, by a nose—place, dead heat between Tyrshena and Knight of the Garter."

After the races were over, and while Royal was entertaining a party of friends, and the wine was flowing freely, a Western Union Telegraph boy brought him a telegram.

Boarding the New York special, in five hours he was shaking hands with Wainright in the Manhattan club.

"I see you got my dispatch, Royal."

"Yes; I happened to be at the hotel when it arrived."

"Now, Royal, let's get down to business; there's no time to lose. I promised to let you into the good thing when it came off, and the 'melon' is now ready to be cut. Have you heard anything more about the Jack-Pot mine?"

"Not a word, Wainright; not a word, except what you told me."

"Royal, I've been waiting for ever so long a time to reciprocate the kind act you did for me some time ago, and the reason I sent the dispatch is for you to be on hand when the information comes, so that you can get in on the ground floor."

Royal was thunderstruck. With all his tact, shrewdness and ingenuity, it was very evident that he was being sold. Was Wainright, above all men, leading him on, and, after making a perjurer of him, going to brand him as a blackleg? Did he know that he was at the head of the Jack-Pot swindle? Well, he wouldn't weaken; he would make Wainright show his hand; he would call him and go the limit before acknowledging anything. The cleverest of us, disguise it as we may, may rest assured that when a great crisis is at hand, and we think we are so stoical that no one can discern any change in our features; if they don't it is not that it does not occur, but from some other cause is not noticed. Royal was above the average in this respect, having dissembled so much in his life that it took a keen observer to notice any change. But change he did when Wainright was telling him that a plan had been formed to get the exact information about the mine. One thing was certain; he was betrayed.



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"I'm sure, Wainright, I shall be eternally grateful to you if you can put me onto the exact standing of the mine," said he with the best grace possible. He was in a state of uncertainty as to whether Wainright knew all, and being guilty, took the smile which Wainright wore as one of sarcasm, but merely held his breath and waited. Wainright didn't speak for a minute. Royal was certain now that he knew all, and that minute made a different man of him. He was courageous to a fault, and when once the gauntlet was thrown down, would stay to the bitter end. This minute seemed an age.

"Royal," said Wainright.

"Yes," thought Royal, "he knows all."

"Let's get into some quiet corner; then I'll explain everything."

Seated at a table in a corner of the cafe, puffing nervously at their cigars with a bottle of Mumm's in front of them, Wainright told how they had sent a man to Denver who was thoroughly reliable. This man had hired an expert to get a job in the mine—not to be in a hurry, but to make his report in a thorough manner. Then how the man had been hired by the manager of the mine, and the news would be in New York within the next twenty-four hours. So far Wainright had not mentioned the fact, if he knew it, whether Royal was a partner in the mining swindle. Royal sat there as if glued to the chair, not daring to speak. When Wainright had finished describing the details of the plan to procure the information, he paused, and filling both his own and Royal's glass, said:

"Royal, the bubble will be pricked to-morrow for certain; let us drink success to the plot."

Royal still held the glass of wine in his hand untouched.

"Give me your hand, Royal, that you will keep this a secret and I'll give you the juiciest morsel to-morrow that ever tickled your palate, and which will no doubt be the means of making us both rich for the remainder of our lives."

Royal gulped down the wine. It was evident that at present Wainright did not know he had anything to do with the swindle.

"Capital, by Jove—the best I ever heard. Say, Wainright, if Pinkerton ever hears of this, he'll be sure to hire you for one of his sleuths. When does your man commence to work in the mine, Wainright? I mean, does he start to-day or to-morrow?"

"He is to work in the night shift, and will commence to-night."

"Splendid, deuced clever, Wainright, without a doubt a shrewd bit of work. Just excuse me; I'll be back in a minute, and we'll take supper together."

"All right, Royal, go ahead; don't hurry, I've got some company here which will have to be replenished when you come back," pointing to the bottle of wine.

Royal went direct to the telegraph office and sent a cipher message to Harvey, stating that the man he had hired was a spy.

When he returned, Wainright said:

"Royal, how did you leave the dear girls in Saratoga? You seem to be a great favorite among them, but I'm afraid they'll be the death of you before you stop."

"That's no joke, Wainright; they've killed many a man."

"Well, I don't think death has any horrors for you, Royal. You take life easy; come day, go day, you never care whether school keeps or not."

After various subjects had been discussed, Royal said:

"Wainright, how many of you are there in the deal to get the information about the mine?"

"Well, let me see — there's Teddy Carter, Miles Haffenden, George Weech, Dick Darvell, and one or two others."

"Quite a number of you."

"Well, we're all pretty well loaded up with the stock, and want to know whether to hold or unload."

"On the innocents?" queried Royal.

"Well, business is business, Royal, and if the mine is a swindle, we don't want to hold this stock a minute longer than we can."

"You are a very wise crowd, Wainright."

Royal, at last, to use his own expression, "was up against it." "The jig was up," he remarked to Brady.

He knew he could not evade exposure much longer; and the possibility of a term in Sing Sing determined him to act at once. He at first thought of standing his ground, and reasoned very wisely that he had too much money for them to send him to jail. Then he again reasoned that if he escaped, it would be only after they had bled him of every dollar he possessed.

When he got to his office in the morning there were two telegrams waiting for him: One from Harvey stating that he had caught the miner when he was coming off the night shift, and sending him to the

strong room under pretext of procuring material, had locked him in the room. None of the other miners knew what had become of him, Ben telling them he had quit. The other telegram was from England in cipher code, stating that there would be no difficulty in unloading a million, as people in and around Liverpool were simply Jack-Pot mad after the late boom in the stock.

Royal and his followers had twice boomed the Jack-Pot stock, and each time, as seen, while the stock was steadily advancing, and they were almost ready to unload, a rumor was started which caused it to decline rapidly. He would make one more gigantic boom and unload as quickly as possible.

"It's getting pretty warm—I'll have to get out while there's a chance. I'll bet that fellow, Flint, is at the bottom of all this. The fellow is too rich for me to bribe; he'd sooner see me in Sing Sing than have all the money in the States. Well, it's all in a lifetime; he's having his day—I've had mine."

The miner, Pete, had hung around the mine until Harvey put him to work for a few days to enable him to earn enough to get to another mining camp, he having told Harvey he was completely out of funds. Pete informed Freeman, who immediately wired the news to Carter—then waited a week after Pete went to work in the mine, and not hearing from him, and not being able to stand the suspense any longer, decided that the only thing for him to do was to put on a bold front and go to the mine and make inquiries about him. He knew that Harvey would know him again; but he would tell him that Pete had promised to take out some insurance in his company. When



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he arrived at the mine he found that no one was admitted, and was told that if he had any business to transact, to go to the office. Walking into the office, he saw Harvey at the desk. As soon as Harvey saw Freeman he gritted his teeth. He felt like strangling him on the spot. They had searched Pete and found one of Freeman's letters, telling him to use great caution in getting the right information,

"Good morning, Mr. Harvey," said Freeman.

"Good morning, Mr. Freeman; how is the insurance business?"

"Very good, thank you."

"Have you come to insure me, Mr. Freeman?"

"No, sir," answered Freeman, smilingly. "I'll tell you what brought me here, Mr. Harvey, and perhaps you can help me out in the matter. There was a man called at my office by the name of Pete Parker, and stated that if he got a job in your mine he would take out a policy, and as I want to make a good showing to the company, I thought I would call and see what became of him."

"I did hire a man by that name, but he skipped out after working one shift," replied Harvey.

"Have you any idea where he went?" queried Freeman.

"None in the least. Miners are a rambling lot of fellows. If you'll take a seat I'll talk with one of the miners he worked with; he might know something of his whereabouts."

"Ben," said Harvey, "the man that hired Pete to get the information about the mine is in the office. What's the best thing to do with him?"



"Put him in with the other fellow. If you let him go there's a chance of him bribing some of the men, and possibly finding out we have his man caged."

"I think you are right, Ben. We might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. Bring Pat and that mate of his; and when I send him to you to find out if you know anything about Pete, after you talk with him for a minute or so, seize him quickly, as he may be handy with the revolver which I've no doubt he carries."

Returning to the office, Harvey, addressing Freeman, said:

"If you'll step this way, Mr. Freeman, I've a man here that can give you some information about the miner, Pete."

"I'm sure it's very kind of you to take this trouble, Mr. Harvey," replied Freeman.

"Don't mention it, Mr. Freeman; I'm a little interested in the fellow, and am anxious for you to get your insurance."

After walking a yard or two, Freeman was seized by two burly miners. He saw it was useless to struggle, as another miner stood by apparently waiting for orders from Ben, should his services be required.

"This is a purty little gun," said Ben, as he drew forth from Freeman's pocket a Smith & Wesson. "Tell Mr. Harvey I want him," said Ben to the miner that stood by.

Harvey came out of the office, and addressing Freeman, said:

"I suppose, Mr. Freeman, you think you've played, or would have played, a smart game, if it had gone through—coming on here to Denver and hiring men



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to spy into the working of this mine. I never trusted you—no, not from the first day I met you at the Albany, and had an idea that your insurance business was a fake. Well, you've fallen into your own trap. I might state to you, Mr. Freeman, that I am looking after the interest of the stockholders of the Jack-Pot mine, and while I have charge of the same don't propose to have any sneaking hounds like you prowling around the place. We've got your man, Pete, locked up in the strong room, and you'll have the pleasure of his company until I hear from headquarters."



CHAPTER LV.

ROYAL and his gang, with the strong support of the London and Liverpool markets, had been able to kill off the bear raid, and turned all the correct information which Meek and Todd & Co. possessed into a ghost story of the most Ananias type in order to force down the stock of such a bonanza mine as the Jack-Pot. But in the last few weeks, conditions in reference to the mine had changed. Royal's enemy had been working night and day to down him; and he knew that Flint would spare no money in bringing him to account; then the powerful clique that was behind Wainright and Freeman; the several men who had appeared at the mine using Royal's name as a subterfuge to gain admittance—all told him that he must act without further delay.

The morning following the night that Royal had taken supper with Wainright, he received a long cipher telegram from Harvey. After reading it he said:

"Harvey's a bird—he is, for sure. They had better send on some more sleuths to fall into his man-trap. But I must act, and act quickly. If I could square Wainright and his clique, I never could do anything with Flint; and as I live I'm sure he's in league with my downtown manager. The report from the 'shadow' I placed on them leaves no room for doubt. It is not the money, altogether, that Flint lost in the



'Electric' that has made him such a deadly enemy of mine. What he wants is revenge for cutting him out with Blanche. I know I was a fool; yes, a consummate jackass for antagonizing him in that direction; but, like a great many more, I was not satisfied and wanted the earth. I suppose, though, if Flint did not down me it would be some one else, so what's the use of crying over it? I would like to save Wainright and the rest of the boys, and will if they'll keep quiet and trust me."

By the greatest amount of nerve, with the bribery of several mining papers—that is, those that could be bought, Royal managed to stem the tide that had set in against the stock; but the strain and the chicanery that he had to resort to was more than he could ever undergo again.

That night, Royal, Bowers, Brady and Renshaw all met in Royal's bachelor quarters. Royal told his partners that they had spies all around, and that it was impossible to go any further in the scheme; also that he was afraid to try and realize on the New York stock market, as it would be too risky because of his enemies, who, if they had not the exact facts, knew enough to start an investigation, which no doubt would be the means of causing a collapse of the deal.

"The best thing we can do," said Royal, "is to unload the stock in England, as you know the last letter that Shady sent states that they are just crazy over Jack-Pot in Liverpool, and he thinks that we should have no difficulty in unloading a million. His letter also states that there is a powerful clique, backed by the same fellow, Robinson, that pulled it out of the

fire during the last bear raid. What I purpose is to go over there, and as soon as I arrive, for you to hire some dupes to keep the office open until you can join me. You know how to fix it up with them; you've gone to Chicago and will be back in a day or two. I'll make the same arrangements with Harvey. I dislike unloading on these Englishmen, on account of them helping us out in the late deal; but it is a case of throwing them down, or our friends. There is not the least doubt but that some one got into the mine on that last deal, and it nearly killed me trying to pull it through, and I never could have done so only for the help these Englishmen gave me; but we won out, and it only goes to show what nerve and money will do. They had the true information, but from lack of ability to handle it, were beaten at their own game. I hear that the man Dempsey, who originated the bear raid, is in jail, wondering how it all happened, and has got two years to consider it."

Royal, with all of his desperate and seemingly careless indifference to the future, wanted to leave as good an impression behind him as he could among those that knew him, and did not want any of the club members, with whom he had been in the habit of associating so long, to remember him as the man who had been the means of fleecing them out of so much money. He did not care, when the crisis came, what the general public thought of him; but these members of the club, who had opened so many bottles with him, and who considered him a prince of good fellows, he wanted to protect. Going down to Wainright's office, he said:



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"Have you heard anything from your man yet?"

"Not a word, Royal. The boys are afraid that something has happened, as in reply to telegrams sent to the hotel, they send word that they have not seen him for a week, and can't explain his disappearance as all his effects are still in his room."

"Look here, Wainright," exclaimed Royal, "you'll never hear a word from your man Freeman, at least not until I allow him to send you word. I've got him caged. He's completely in my power, for the present at least."

"Royal, it can't be possible that you've betrayed me? Is this how you repay my confidence? Fool that I was to trust you or any living being. My God! What will the other members of the pool say when they find out I have betrayed the trust they placed in me? There's just one place for an ingrate, and that's—hell, and if I could send you, you'd be there before another night passes over your head."

"When you've simmered down, Wainright, I'll explain matters."

"No explanation can ever undo what you've done. No, damn you; I feel like braining you."

"Look here, Wainright, if you'll keep quiet I'll explain all. I intend to do what's right as regards you and your friends; but I'll not stand to be insulted by you or any one else, and from my past record, you ought to know I'm no coward."

"Coward! Coward! If you're not a coward, what are you? A damned sneak? I came to you as an old friend, and in the fullness of my heart for a kindness that I had once received at your hands, wished to repay



you by giving you information how you could make some money. I told you at the time that I'd given my word as a gentleman not to reveal anything we were doing; but I thought that with you, anxious as I was to do you a good turn, the secret would be safe; and what's the result? By some devilish scheme, according to what you say, you have betrayed me. Man—have you no shame—or feeling—that you can sit there with a sarcastic grin on your face, amusing yourself at the contemptible predicament I am in? You care not a jot for the scorn and derision that I'll be subjected to when my associates find out that I have played the Judas—and for what? Was it to enrich myself at their expense? No; I'm betrayed because I tried to do a kindness for a friend."

"Wainright, there is one thought I have kept uppermost in my mind all the time I have been listening to the strong invectives that you have hurled at me, and that thought has saved you, or one of us, from ever uttering another word—it is the kindness that you intended doing me when you gave me the secret; but I warn you, as a friend or enemy—you can take it either way—that I'll not listen to another word of your abuse; also, I demand, if you can, show me, after I explain matters, that I have done anything that you, or any other man in my position, would not have done; then I'll listen to more of your censure. In the first place, Wainright, if you'll remember, you came to me,—I did not go prying around to know your secret. So much for that part of it. Supposing you and your associates, Wainwright, at an enormous outlay bought a controlling interest in a mine,



and when you got the mine into such shape that you were in a position—that is, if the secrets of the mine were kept—to get returns for the great outlay, a party of wealthy clubmen and stockbrokers formed a pool to get the secrets of the mine, call it what you will, I ask you as a gentleman, and to use one of the epithets which you so freely hurled at me, is it not a ‘damned sneaking trick’? I haven’t one word to say against you, Wainright, or any gentleman doing what you’ve done; but when you are caught in your own trap, you ought to be gentlemanly enough to swallow the dose, instead of playing the martyr and thinking yourself so terribly abused. Did you, or any of these gentlemen, risk thousands to make this mine a good investment? No; you simply stood on the outside, and then tried, through chicanery, to steal the results of all the time, money and brains used in working this mine, without it ever costing you a dollar except the man’s expenses to Denver.”

“Royal, I’ve listened to enough of this damned lecture of yours. You rant and prate about deceiving people; then you cajole the secrets out of the men who are paying the expenses, then use them to your own advantage; if that isn’t so, why are you so damnable interested in the Jack-Pot mine. What have you got to do with it?”

“I’m merely the owner.”

“You!”

“Yes, Wainright, I control the Jack-Pot mine. and so far have manipulated every movement that has been made in reference to the same. You know, Wainright, that the devil always takes care of his



own, and it is very evident that when you and your partners formed the scheme to get at the inside facts of the mine, he, as my guardian angel, directed your footsteps to me. As I have stated, I have no hard feelings against you or the other members of the pool; but you'll grant me the privilege of conducting my business as I think best. The same spirit that guided your footsteps to me shall also be the means of protecting you and your associates from losing any money in Jack-Pot stock. I'm ready, Wainwright, to buy at the market price all the stock you and your associates are carrying; and will sign an agreement to pay you the difference should the stock advance. Understand—you'll lose no money through me, Wainwright."

Wainwright jumped from his chair, and going over to Royal, grasped his hand, saying:

"Royal, I was beside myself with rage when I discovered, as I supposed at the time, that you had played the sneak act on my confidence. I can tell you honestly that I don't give a rap about the money I, myself, would lose; but the thought that all the boys would know I had betrayed their trust drove me crazy for the time being."

"Wainright, all you have to do in this matter is to keep mum and leave the rest to me."

"Give me your hand, Royal. Is it a go?"

"You've my word, Wainright."

"How are you going to work it?"

"Just have faith in me, Wainright, and a little patience, and—remember, 'mum's the word'."

"I'll trust you implicitly, Royal."



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The following morning, after opening his mail, Royal made his way to the office of Teddy Carter, musing:

"Wainright and his crowd must have my first care; and if I can fix them, and keep them quiet, I may be able to pull through, and hold on long enough to dispose of the stock."

Carter, receiving Royal's card, told the boy to show the gentleman in.

"Mr. Carter, I'd like you to give me five minutes of your time listening to what I've got to say; and hope that you will not interrupt me until I have finished. Why I make this apparently strange request, is that you are likely to become angry and lose your temper; but from what I have heard of you as a business man, I feel sure that if you'll hear me to the end you'll find the proposition that I'm going to make you, a fair one."

"Fire away, Mr. Ryalls; I'm all attention, and am totally in the dark as to the nature of the business you have on hand."

"To begin with, Mr. Carter, you sent a man named Freeman to Black Hawk, Denver, to pry into the secrets, as to the true standing of the Jack-Pot mine. This man, Freeman, hired a miner named Pete to get a job in the mine. (Blank amazement on Carter's face.) The superintendent of the mine was suspicious of this miner, and only gave him a job in order to find out who was behind him. Upon searching the fellow, it was evident he was hired by your man, Freeman, as he had a letter from him in his pocket. The miner was locked up in the strong-room, and in



a few days your man Freeman came to the mine to make inquiries about him. We then took care of Mr. Freeman, and in doing so a letter was found in his possession which left no doubt as to his being in your employ. I have the letter with me at present. I have not come here, Mr. Carter, to annoy you or your associates, as I presume there are others in this deal besides yourself, nor do I care about the wrong or the right of your employing such means as you did to get the facts of the mine. As you are no doubt aware, it has cost a large sum of money to put this mine on a footing, and at the present time we are not ready, and don't want the public to know our private business. While I know you very well by sight, Mr. Carter, I've never until to-day had the pleasure of talking to you, and am here to prevent any gossip or notoriety about the mine. Now, if you will listen a little longer, I've got a proposition to make to you. I don't know whether you are carrying any of the stock or not; but if you are, and will accept my offer, I'll guarantee that you won't lose anything. My proposition is this: If you and your associates, if you have any, will sell me the stock that you have, I'll pay you the market price for it, and will guarantee you the difference should the stock go above its present price; this agreement to stand good for one year. On the other hand, if you don't want to sell, don't forget that I offered to take all the stock off your hands."

"One think I'd like to know, Mr. Ryalls; whom are you representing?"

"The parties that have a controlling interest in the mine."

"Would you care to tell who they are?"

"Yes, I might as well tell you, Mr. Carter, as it will be public property soon; but I want a solemn promise from you, and if you have anybody else in with you, I want you to exact the same promise from them; and that is part of the reason why I am so anxious to see that you don't lose any money in this stock deal. I want you and them to keep secret what, if anything, you know about the mine."

"I guess that can be arranged. When do you want the stock if we decide to sell?"

"At once; and this offer only holds good until to-morrow night."

"You didn't tell me, Mr. Ryalls, who the parties are that control the mine. I don't wish to be too inquisitive, but are you personally acquainted with them?"

At this query of Carter's, Royal could not restrain himself, and laughed outright.

"Has the query touched an amusing chord in the symphony of your anatomy?"

"It certainly has, Mr. Carter, as the gentleman that controls the Jack-Pot mine is in your presence."

"You? The devil you do!"

"I certainly do, Mr. Carter, and I want you to give me your word as a gentleman that you won't breathe a word of this to any one."

"You have it, certainly, Mr. Ryalls, and I'll lay your proposition before the other members in the morning."

"Then there are others?"



"Yes, sir; there are eight of us in the scheme, and we wanted to know where we were at before we invested any more money in the stock. Have you got Freeman fastened up in some place? The hotel people can't give us any information about him, and I'd like to know where the devil he is."

"I'll give you my word that no harm comes to him, and that is one of the reasons why I told you I controlled the mine. I don't want him in New York until after the deal that I am about to make goes through, and it was to stop you and your associates from making too many inquiries about him, and possibly set tongues wagging, that I have gone to all the trouble and expense in taking the stock off your hands. I can arrange for him to write you a letter so that you'll know he's safe."

"Do so, Mr. Ryalls, and I'll set to work at once, and will be at your office to-night."

"All right, Mr. Carter, and if they decide to sell, bring the stock with you and I'll give you a check and a guarantee to pay you the difference should it go up."

Royal wired to Harvey to tell Freeman he would be allowed to write to Carter, but that there must not be any thing concerning the mine in it. Harvey was to mail it to Royal for his inspection before delivering it to Carter.

Carter, after a meeting with his associates, called on Royal, and told him he would be at his office the next day with the stock.

"Your check's ready, Carter. any time."

Royal, to use his own words, was "between the devil and the deep sea." The wires were slowly but



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surely tightening around him, and it was only a question of a short time when he would have to fly, or face a long term in prison.

The powers that had steered his barque clear through the Electric Sugar deal, and the Miller syndicate, were after him. They had finally been tipped off that he was the manipulator of the Jack-Pot mine. They never stopped to make too many inquiries as to whether it was a *bona fide* speculation, but jumped to the conclusion that anything Royal was interested in must be a winner, independent of the fact whether it was a good investment or not. They very ably reasoned that all of Royal's schemes were good investments, at least they appeared so for a certain time; and nothing was left to chance as to whether the public would buy them, for they were always made so enticing that the dear public never stopped to think, but got aboard, and never realized that they had been taken in until it was too late.

He reasoned that his past record was such that once it was opened to the light of day, and the newspapers got wind of it, if he gave up every dollar to the POWERS, they could not possibly, in the face of public opinion, save him from State's prison. No; he must get out with all haste.

The following Saturday he took a train for Pittsburg; from there he went to Buffalo; from Buffalo to Montreal. He had shaved off his moustache, and before he started had seen to it that all of the Jack-Pot stock had been sent to his Liverpool brokers, and was fearful lest anything should happen before he could unload it on his dear English' cousins.



All the mining papers that Royal, through his gold, could bribe, were placated. Some of them he had bought body and soul. Of others that he dared not approach, he had bribed their trusted employees.

Brady, Bowers and Renshaw were attending to the office duties of Reed & Co., to all outward appearances the same as usual. They had held a meeting with Royal before he sailed, and his orders were to the effect that they should hold everything as tight as they could until they were advised by cable to get out, which would not be until he had unloaded the stock.

In due season Royal arrived in Liverpool. His faithful henchman, the ex-lawyer Shady, was on hand to receive him. Well might the old saying be verified, "as thick as thieves." They could not have been more affectionate if they had been long lost brothers meeting after being separated for a term of years. At the Adelphi hotel that night, after partaking of an excellent dinner, of which the ex-lawyer had not had many of late, they discussed their plans.

Shady told Royal that the stock was well thought of in Liverpool, and that he would have no difficulty in selling all he had.

The last edition of the American mining papers told the most wonderful stories of the great strike of ore in the now famous Jack-Pot mine. These papers arrived in England on the same steamer as the stock Royal had sent to his Liverpool brokers. On top of this, the New York stock exchange reported Jack-Pot as very active; then followed rumors of a dividend about to be declared.



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At this time a clique of brokers working in the interest of Royal did the matching process, and the ticker reported sales of ten thousand shares of Jack-Pot. The Liverpudlians were being warmed and toasted by the wily manipulators of the stock as never before. Royal was afraid of the New York market, but had figured that while certain people were busy ensnaring him, he could by good luck get to England, and, if his good fortune lasted, he would just about have time to unload before the thunder-clap broke and the swindle was unearthed.

The Liverpool papers caught the fever as the cable told the wonderful strike of rich ore in the mine and the great activity of the stock in New York, and of a New York syndicate about to be formed to buy the now celebrated mine, with advice to those who held the stock to hold on to it; all this with secret tips that had been circulated through Royal and Shady, caused the wildest excitement among those who gambled in stocks.

The brokers with whom Royal had placed the stock were about the sharpest and shrewdest in Liverpool. They went on the exchange the next day, and in the most reckless manner commenced to buy Jack-Pot stock; this, with the fever that was raging to possess it, caused the widest kind of a market. It was Jack-Pot and nothing but Jack-Pot. While one firm of Royal's brokers were making the wildest display in buying the stock, two other concerns were quietly unloading. It was the broad market that had been created that enabled them to do this. Orders of all sizes came in. The small investors took their money



from banks and bought as many shares as they could. But with all the apparent buying the stock did not rise. Royal knew that he had not a minute to lose, as at any moment the cable might flash the news that the mine was a swindle.

The head of the firm of brokers whom Royal had employed to unload the stock had that rare gift of which so few brokers are possessed, that while apparently he was buying stock in large blocks, he was in reality selling the same.

Robinson had given his brokers orders to protect the stock, and as fast as Royal's brokers offered it, the Robinson crowd snapped it up, and at noon the stock rose one-eighth over the opening price.

The orders from the small speculators had ceased coming in, and the room traders and those that had been caught in the last attempt to bear the stock and forced to cover at ruinous prices, fought shy of it, not caring to take any chances on a stock that was so closely held.

The bulls, scenting the heavy selling from some mysterious quarter, also hung back, until the battle finally resulted in an issue between Royal's brokers selling, and Robinson's buying.

When the market opened on the second day, the ticker denoted an advance of one point on the strength of small outside investors and some covering by the shorts.

While the battle between the brokers was at its height, Royal received two cable dispatches at an hour's interval. He phoned to his broker to sell out



the remainder of the stock; not to care how plainly he was selling it.

Robinson's brokers, in protecting the stock, were simply snowed under with it.

"This fellow's game, whoever he is," said Royal, when informed that one firm was buying all the stock for a Liverpool merchant.

At this time all that is wanted is a good bear leader, but they had been caught in the late bear raid, and not knowing who was selling it, and the fact that Robinson was gobbling up all that was offered, kept them back; but the stock did not rise. Royal's brokers had their orders, and under the heavy selling as the market closed, the stock dropped three points in as many minutes, closing weak.

Robinson and his brokers, thinking they would squeeze the life out of the people who had sold the stock, called for it.

"Get your money ready, gentlemen, and I'll be at your office in the morning with it," said Royal's broker.

Robinson, when informed of this, wondered where he was going to raise such an enormous sum, but was not at all daunted.

People who had spent a lifetime on Change speculated as to what banks were behind him in the purchase of the controlling interest of the Jack-Pot mine. They reasoned that with all the money he had he could not possibly raise enough to pay for the stock; and anxiously waited the outcome of the enormous obligations Robinson had assumed.



It was the greatest day Liverpool had seen on the exchange. On the Woodside ferry boats; in the underground railway; nothing else was talked about among the business men that make the Cheshire side of the Mersey their homes.

Robinson at the present time was considered one of the richest men in Liverpool; but his riches were of such a nature that when he went to the banks to ask a loan, all the security he had to offer was stocks, and non-dividend at that. The fact that the securities were American, with which the British public had burned their fingers so often, made the banks wary as to the amount they loaned on the stock.

It had been quietly rumored about the city, however, that one, if not more, of the banks were behind Robinson in the deal; this fact, and being well liked, and having a reputation for integrity second to none in Liverpool, enabled him, before it was known that he was pinched for money, to borrow on his notes for thirty days. He spared none; anybody who had money he approached, and the people thought it a favor to loan the rich Robinson money to enable him to buy a controlling interest in this gold mine.

When he had all he could borrow, with what he had in the banks, besides what the banks loaned him on the stock, he was still short of the amount required. He must raise it at all hazards. It would not do for it to leak out that he had not sufficient capital, as it would be the means of bringing everybody down on him in one wild swoop—ruining him in a single day.

Robinson, for the first time since he began to speculate, had struck a snag; but there are always willing



people to help a good man like Robinson out of a difficulty, if—he has the security to give. Robinson never flinched. He knew he was dead beat as far as raising any more outside money went, and decided to mortgage everything he had to raise the amount needed to pay for the balance of the stock.

The evening following the day of the announcement in the papers of the great rise of Robinson in the financial world, he brought home with him to dinner two gentlemen from Liverpool. They were such nice, smooth, social people, that their condescending manners quite won over Mrs. Robinson, who at first was inclined to be a little snobbish when introduced to them, being prejudiced on account of their personal appearance, which was decidedly Jewish. The people of this faith never appear to hear or see anything when on business bent, but business. Consequently they keep to the one point and pay no attention to either flattery or insults; remaining calm, letting the Christian worry himself into their way of thinking. Robinson had telegraphed for his wife to take the first train to Birkenhead as he wanted to see her on important business. She left the Dartmoor estate in high glee. Could she by the faintest hint have gleaned what her husband wanted, Robinson might have raved and stormed, tore his hair, and brought the whole of the business he had on hand to an abrupt stop—but his wife would never have left the Dartmoor's until such time as suited her convenience.

After dinner these two nice, smooth gentlemen took a look through the Robinson mansion. Mrs. Rob-



inson was elated to find that they were so interested; they saw and admired everything. Nothing was left to chance. Every room was entered. They listened so attentively to the great prices that Robinson told them he had paid for the various articles; and Mrs. Robinson wondered—it was so unlike Robinson to dwell on the price of anything; he was generally so modest, but it pleased her vanity. They then went to the stables; saw the horses; then the carriages; then walked around the grounds. “Yes, you have a splendid house and grounds, Mrs. Robinson.” They stayed and played a game of whist, and then adjourned to Robinson’s “den,” and in a casual manner Mrs. Robinson was called to witness some little business transaction, and incidentally sign her name to some papers, which she had been in the habit of doing on many occasions since Robinson’s rise to affluence.

Robinson raised the balance of the money to pay for the stock; but in doing so had given a blanket mortgage on his house, stables and carriages, including all the household furniture—in fact, everything he possessed.

Mrs. Robinson was perfectly oblivious to the fact that she and her husband were standing on a financial volcano which at any moment might belch forth and ruin them; and the following day returned to the Dartmoor’s.

The Liverpool Mercury, Courier, and the Post, each had an article the next day commenting on the fact that one of their business men had, through his boldness, obtained a controlling interest in the now celebrated Jack-Pot gold mine. They dwelt largely on



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the dash of Robinson, and in speaking of his meteoric rush up the financial ladder of fame, said: "It savored more of the American than the conservative Englishman."

During the whirlwind of events that had taken place in the lives of the Robinsons, there was one that had not in the slightest degree been affected by this sudden acquisition of wealth; and if it had not been for the numerous trips Ruth made to the shops, and the rapidity with which her gifts to the poor multiplied, no one could have discerned that her father's wealth had in any way affected her.



CHAPTER LVI.

THE powers that run New York—that is, those of the extreme inner circles, the chief of police, with certain parties from the district attorney's office, were weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth. One of the slickest of the slick had eluded them. They had been tipped off too late. The bird had flown. They were now moralizing on the juicy morsel they had missed. There possibly would have been a half million to divvy up among a certain select few. The bird had only flown a short time before they procured the information. They had every wardman in the city on his track, although there had been no charge preferred against him. There wasn't a club in New York they hadn't visited. The wardmen had been promised an extra stake if they brought him in. It was only after their men came back from Denver, and found out they, like others, had been fooled, that they threw up the sponge and admitted their defeat. When they had first received the information their palms fairly tickled, as they imagined the big, fat roll of bills they would make the bird disgorge; yes, the most powerful emetic would be applied. One of them had already begun to make plans of what he would do with the plunder he obtained from this gentleman. It is very seldom that any of the "big guns" escape from the clutches of the police; but this time Royal had taken time by the forelock, and escaped before the swindle was unearthed. As stated, there had been no outcry against the firm of Reed & Co., con-



sequently the police for two reasons remained passive. The first was they wished a private interview with Royal, as they could then use as a club to make him disgorge, the indictments that were lying dormant in the district attorney's office; and after the disgorging process had taken place, a plan for him to escape would be arranged; but should the public force a trial, they would still further renew their kindness by arranging that his case be put off from time to time, until finally he was allowed out on bail; and then in a manner which to the uninitiated is very mysterious, the indictment would be pigeon-holed. They had been told by Royal's enemy, Flint, that Royal was at the head of the gang that was running the celebrated Jack-Pot mine, and that he, Flint, had information that the mine was a fizzle; also, that they had never gotten an ounce of gold out of it since he took hold. This was all the information they wanted. The most important thing about the information was, that they could arrest Royal and make him disgorge without any preliminaries, as they had, as before stated, in the secret archives of the district attorney's office, enough evidence to send him over the road for a long term of years.

The police of New York—that is, the heads of the force—are the most forgiving people in the world. They are Cæsarían in their forgiving natures. They shudder at the thought of sending a man to prison for a long term of years. They reason that it was the temptation of money that caused his downfall; and with Solomon-like wisdom, they remove the temptation by relieving him of his ill-gotten gains. This money, after passing into their hands, is by some hyp-



notic influence relieved of its evil powers; sanctified and blessed; then once more sent on its round of usefulness.

The first intimation the public had that anything was wrong with the concern that was running the Jack-Pot mine, was the notice that the mine had shut down. Wiring to Denver, it was learned that the men in the mine had been paid off, and the works were closed. In less than an hour it was flashed all over Europe. The news fell like a bombshell on the London and Liverpool stock exchanges. While London had been hit rather hard, it was nothing to the havoc it caused in Liverpool. When this news arrived in Liverpool, Robinson, who was in his broker's office at the time, received it as one in a dream. It could not be true. No, it was some trick of the stock market to bear the stock. But this nightmare that Robinson was temporarily laboring under soon vanished when the holders of Jack-Pot tried to realize on their holdings. It could not be called "a panic on the exchange" which ensued when the news was verified; it was more like a balloon bursting in mid-air, the occupants falling to mother earth with a sickening thud.

One broker, determined to execute an order he had received from a customer to sell a thousand shares at any price, no matter what he could get; and being somewhat of a wag, called for a thousand Jack-Pot. One hundred voices roared at him, one hundred hands gesticulating, threatened, as it were, to annihilate him with the word "sold." He had thought to throw out a feeler to see if there was any possibility of executing the order he had to sell; but by the time the mob of maniacs, which the holders of Jack-Pot resembled more



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than anything else, got through with him, a more bedraggled looking object would have been difficult to find. No, Jack-Pot was dead. Some of the facetious brokers said it was "too dead to skin."

The following morning the cable reported the doleful tidings. Then followed the announcement: "Extraordinary disclosures in connection with the Jack-Pot mine swindle," stating that the offices of the Jack-Pot mine company in lower Broadway were merely run by dupes to shield the rascality of the real manipulators, who were a firm of swell mining brokers—all club men of the highest apparent standing, having their offices in the St. James building.

The news in New York clubdom, when first received, that Royal was the ringleader of the stupendous swindle, was such that the members at first paid little heed to it, thinking it a mistake; but when all doubt was removed, it became the gossip of the clubs, each member asking the other how much Jack-Pot he was carrying. Teddy Carter and the other members of the pool merely smiled.

Harvey, after liberating Freeman and arranging matters as satisfactorily as conditions would allow, had made his way to Chicago.



CHAPTER LVII.

WHEN the news was corroborated, and the magnitude of the swindle had dawned upon the people of Liverpool, there ensued the usual gossip and "I-told-you-sos" from the wiseacres. Those who could not buy the stock at the time it was on the boom, and cursed fate that kept them out of the supposed good thing, were now trying to show to the public in general how wise they had been, and were very, very busy telling their friends that a man with half an eye could have seen it was nothing less than a gigantic swindle.

It was the most complete wreck the stock exchange had ever recorded. There had been no warning. Robinson and the people who held the stock had not a chance to sell a single share. It was like a ship whose boilers had burst in mid-ocean, going down without a moment's warning. The shares of the stock that had cost so much were now worthless paper. The ironical leaders in some of the newspapers were a revelation in sarcasm for which the average Briton is notorious. They said such things could not be done in England. They raved and stormed, not taking time to think that the people who engaged in stock mining speculations did so of their own free will, and that the government of the United States was not engaging detectives to look after the interests of private individuals who gambled on the stock market.



CHAPTER LVIII.

ROBINSON sat in his private room. He had given orders to the page-boy that he was not in to anybody. He had escaped from his office, as it was simply impossible for him to stay there on account of the continuous mob of people waiting to see him.

"It is at a time like this when a man finds out how important he is to some people," he mused.

Robinson had been dogged, hounded and harassed almost beyond endurance by an army of hungry creditors. They resembled a pack of wolves more than human beings. The worst and most persistent of them were those who had shared, with Robinson, the profits that were made when the Jack-Pot stock took its first boom. Now they were the first to howl that they had been swindled out of their money by Robinson. If Robinson had been made of gold and they could have sliced him into small pieces, it is safe to say that he would have ceased to exist any longer than the time it took to get hold of him.

A few days before the news of the shutting down of the mine reached Liverpool, Robinson was in a certain manner a king in the stock market. It was Robinson, and the Robinson crowd; and when any new project was about to be put on the market, there were always rumors that the Robinson party were going to take hold. Robinson at this time had friends by the score. The many handshakes that he received daily had a tendency to harden the muscles of his wrist. It would be safe to wager that from now on



these same muscles would become relaxed and flabby.

People who had been in the habit of going out of their way to meet the jovial Robinson, now kept away from him as much as possible. They were afraid he might want some accommodation; and those whom he happened to run across, when they could not get out of his way, gave him a handshake, with:

"'Pon my word, Robinson, I never felt so sorry in all my life as when I heard of the news of the collapse of the mine—" then left him as abruptly as good breeding would allow, and with a superior air of intelligence went on their way, laughing at the audacity of such men as Robinson trying to rise above them, either socially or pecuniarily.

The clamoring of Robinson's creditors was appalling. There was no abatement. They wanted their pound of flesh. These creditors knew that Robinson's assets could not cover one-third of his liabilities, and each one of them thought that there might be something that they could get Robinson to hold out before the court had an inventory taken of them. They thought nothing of robbing their fellow business men of their just share of any thing they could get hold of, before the inventory was taken. There was a full score of men who were bent on this errand, some of them pillars in the church. It was each man for himself, and the devil take the other fellow. Robinson would have been a regular Sherlock Holmes if he could have evaded this crowd. They fought for an interview, each bent on seeing him first, feeling that, after others had got hold of him, he would be milked dry. They were around him like a pack of hungry dogs after a bone.



The night of the collapse of the mine, at almost every dinner table in Oxton and Claughton, the subject was discussed. Those who held Robinson's notes, and those who didn't, were equally desirous of getting something from the Robinson residence when they heard that everything Robinson had in the world would have to go to satisfy the hungry creditors. Mrs. Ferncliffe had seen and admired a rare bit of statuary when she had been visiting the Robinsons, and sent around to see if Mrs. Robinson would not sell it to her before the creditors took it away from her. Others had been to the two Hebrew gentlemen who held the blanket mortgage, to find out, if they could, whether they had taken an inventory of everything that Robinson possessed. They found that these same gentlemen had two men on guard at the Robinsons', night and day. The Robinsons nor any other person could not remove a single thing from the premises.

At this time Robinson inserted a letter in each of the daily papers to the effect that he had placed all his affairs in his attorney's hands, and that it was no use for any of his creditors to try to see him. Next day appeared the following:

**"TWO MORE FAILURES THROUGH THE
COLLAPSE OF THE JACK-POT MINE."**

One of these was a large jewelry concern, and the other equally as large in the clothing business. The proprietors of these respective firms were both of the Hebrew faith. They had assumedly speculated heavily in Jack-Pot stock and were caught loaded with the same when the mine collapsed. Their safes were full of the securities. They had bought the stock on the advice of their brokers and were holding it

for a rise. Everybody was sorry for these poor retail tradesmen, who, apparently, had had the earnings of all their years of toil and worry swept away from them without any warning.

If the creditors of these Hebrews could have traced the source from which they had received the stock, they no doubt would not have shed any tears at the Hebrews' loss.

On the evening of the collapse of the Jack-Pot mine, when the stock of the same was worthless, a stock-broker of their own faith received a call from these worthies. At the meeting it was arranged that the broker was to borrow for each of them fifty thousand dollars' worth of the stock. This stock was placed in their safes. Their creditors swallowed the bait, hook, line and sinker. The Hebrews, when showing the stock, shed copious crocodile tears, and moaned in true Shylock manner the loss of so much money. Some of their creditors, wishing to admonish them, told them it was a good lesson, and that perhaps in the future they would leave the stock market alone and attend to their business—which, of course, they promised to do.

Over their wine the night after passing through bankruptcy proceedings, and settling for a shilling on the pound, they drew long puffs from their pipes and smiled, this time genuinely, in true Hebrew manner, at the way the Christians had swallowed the bait.

Robinson, having pledged himself to do everything in his power to help the banks and other business people straighten out the chaotic state of his affairs, told them that everything he had in the shape of collateral would be turned over to them. Having done



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this, he wrote a long letter to his wife, explaining all.

Mrs. Robinson and Ruth had been notified by wire as soon as the news reached Liverpool of the collapse of the mine. They were both, as stated, guests of the Dartmoors at this time, and while Mrs. Robinson would have liked to run off with Ruth to her husband, her pride would not allow her to do so while their guest.

She told the Earl that she was sure her husband could weather the storm, and that they would come out all right in the end. Both Dartmoor and Rushton tried to persuade Ruth to wait for the garden party before going away. In reply she said she could not wait a minute longer than the next train for Liverpool, as she knew her father must be very lonesome and down-hearted.

Mrs. Robinson was furious when she realized that Ruth was going away, leaving her in the lurch.

Ruth was equally as determined as her mother, only her determination did not show itself in such a decided manner. Her father was in trouble, and every minute was an hour until she was at his side trying to assuage his suffering. She reasoned with her mother in the most gentle and patient manner, but Mrs. Robinson simply stormed and raved. She would attend the garden party; she wouldn't weaken by leaving, though they had lost all they had in the world, if the news could be put off until she had left the Dartmoor's.

Having wired her uncle to meet her, Ruth was driven to the depot, escorted by Rushton and the Earl.



Mrs. Robinson remained to attend the garden party, and the hours that intervened after Ruth's departure for Liverpool were the most miserable she had ever endured in her life. She had pictured in her mind's eye the guests at this garden party raving over the beauty of Ruth; and as she was aware of the unassuming ways of her daughter, she knew that she would at once become a favorite; then she, her mother, would be sought after, then of course would follow introductions and invitations, and all that a woman of Mrs. Robinson's nature so craves. She blamed Ruth for all the misery that followed during those hours.

There she sat, in her silks and satins, laced, rouged and powdered, with a costume so juvenile in appearance that it would have served for her daughter.

The magnet was gone. The magnet that would have caused Mrs. Robinson to swell with motherly pride was on her way to Liverpool. The ladies treated her with cold hauteur. She was a nobody with whom the Earl had become acquainted on his rounds. Dartmoor went to the extreme in his efforts to make Mrs. Robinson as comfortable as possible, but all to no avail, as the chagrin and mortification of the impending downfall of her husband's business weighed heavily on her mind. After the introductions to the Lady So-and-sos present, the conversation waned and turned into frigidness. If Ruth had remained,—ah, how different! Half the young scions of the noble families present would then have been worshipping at her shrine; while she, the proud mother, sat complacently shedding a benign smile as she received their homage.

Mrs. Robinson, with Spartanlike courage, stood, or



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rather sat, through the party, having plenty of food for reflection. It was a question whether, for the time being, the failure of her husband, or her anger at Ruth's departure, worried her the most.

Ruth, on arriving at Liverpool, was met at the depot by her uncle and driven directly to her father's office.

Robinson, whose face had that haggard and careworn appearance that comes to most of us, if we have to undergo any extraordinary trials, brightened and gradually relaxed into a smile as Ruth and her uncle entered the office, like a burst of sunshine forcing itself through the clouds on a dull day.

Robinson knew that no matter what the outside world said about him, Ruth and her uncle would be true blue, now and for all time.

"Did your mother say when she was coming home?"

"I believe, father, she will be here the day after to-morrow."

"Why didn't she come with you, Ruth?"

"The Dartmoors are having a garden party, and as she had given her word, and did not wish the people to think the failure of the mine would ruin you, she remained to attend the function."

"Just like your mother, child; she would die for the sake of appearances."

"Is it possible, papa, that you have lost all?"

"Yes, Ruth, everything is gone; I shall have to begin all over again."

Throwing her arms around his neck, and kissing him fervently, she exclaimed:

"Oh, papa, I'm so sorry; but you must not allow it to worry you, as I am sure we can get along, and everything will be all right in the end."



CHAPTER LIX.

LEAVING the Dartmoors with as much gayety as if she had never known trouble in her life, and that such a thing as money was something that the Robinsons had never to worry about, Mrs. Robinson, ascorted by Rushton and Dartmoor, was driven to the station.

In reply to Dartmoor's solicitation that he hoped Robinson would pull through the present crisis, she answered:

"Never fear, Earl; my husband's means are too great to fail completely. This mine collapse may put us to some inconvenience, but in the end we'll come out with colors flying."

"Well, I hope so, Mrs. Robinson; and I want you to believe me when I say that if I can be of any assistance to you, either pecuniarily or otherwise, let me know, and your request shall not be in vain."

"Thank you ever so much, Earl; I shall never forget your kindness."

"At a time like the present," murmured Mrs. Robinson to herself, "people find out their true friends."

Bidding the Earl and Rushton good-bye as the guard locked the door, Mrs. Robinson was on her way to Oxtou to meet her husband.

As the train pulled out of the station, she lay back in her seat and began to think seriously over the failure. She had been living, as it were, on her nerves for the past twenty-four hours, and while appearing the gayest of the gay at the Dartmoors', the news of



the failure of the mine brought back sad memories of the days of pecuniary embarrassment,—memories when pinching and scraping were her daily grind. It had taken all the strength of her indomitable will power to appear gay, and fight off the impending doom that she felt was fast approaching. Several times the Earl had come upon her when the trouble was gnawing at her heart. With an assumed radiance at the pleasure of meeting him, she was herself again, only to have the fit of remorse heavier than ever when left to herself.

The chagrin and wounded pride she would have to endure would be even worse now than before her husband made his financial coup in the stock market.

These, and a thousand other thoughts of like nature, flashed through her brain as the train whirled her on to Birkenhead. When she arrived at the Birkenhead station, Ruth and her uncle were there to meet her with the Robinson carriage.

When Robinson came home from his office he was told that his wife would like to see him in her room. Robinson dreaded this meeting with his wife more than he had with any of his creditors, not excepting Jenkins, whose niece's money to the tune of thirty thousand pounds had been lost in Jack-Pot stock.

As Mrs. Robinson sat waiting for her husband her countenance gradually assumed a hard, cruel and defiant expression. She could not sit still, and rising from her chair began to pace the room, nervously biting her finger nails. When Robinson entered the room, and she for the first time learned the exact condition of affairs, she commenced to rave and storm. She could not understand. No; it was a mistake.



Their beautiful house, stables, and everything they had in the world to be taken from them?

"Tell me all the particulars. Other people fail in business and make money. You're a fool,—fool, to talk of giving up everything. You say you must pay these people and leave yourself without a pound. For what? To have the world say that Robinson is a good, honest fellow? These same people who are now fawning upon you, patting you on the back, and deifying you as the grand man impoverishing himself and his family that they may ride around and boast to the neighbors that they came out of the Robinson smash all right, would think more of you if you held on to what you have. All the thanks you'll get from them will be a pat on the back and a handshake, saying: 'Robinson, you're an honest man.' After leaving you, the next man they meet they will say to him: 'Robinson, the poor devil, hasn't a leg to stand on; wiped out completely; never saw such a failure.'"

Robinson, having allowed his wife to talk herself into a state of exhaustion, thinking it better not to interrupt her, answered by saying:

"My dear, your ideas are all right; they're splendid—never heard better logic in my life—but in this case they won't work. I want you to prepare yourself for the worst news you will ever have to bear as long as you live. Before I go into details, I also want you to understand that for the past forty-eight hours I have not slept a wink, and at the present time am in such a state that I don't care whether or not I live to see the morrow. When I think of all the people whom I have dragged down with me in this wreck, besides losing the money that Jenkins gave me to invest for



his niece, I feel like making an end of it. I tell you candidly, Emma, I was afraid of your coming home. But all your storming and raving will do no good—understand, my dear—we return to the state we were in before I speculated in the Jack-Pot stock—only worse. Everything we have in this world will be taken from us, and all we'll have when the creditors get through with us will be the clothes on our backs.

"Give me your attention for just one minute more and I'll explain all. You remember the night that Lawyer Holdfast came here to dinner; if so, you'll also recall that it was the night following the one when the two Hebrew gentlemen dined with us, and you took such pains to show them all the paintings and statuary. Well, Emma, those two gentlemen have a mortgage covering everything, and the night Lawyer Holdfast dined with us, you remember, I asked you to come into the study after dinner and sign your name to a legal document. That paper you signed was a blanket mortgage covering everything we own."

"What, am I dreaming? My beautiful home, furniture, carriages and horses to be taken away from me?"

"'Tis only too true, Emma."

With a scream of hysterical rage Mrs. Robinson flew at her husband, exclaiming:

"You villain, to mortgage my home!"

She seized him by the beard and in her fury tried her best to wreak her vengeance upon him. As her temper got beyond her control, she resembled a tigress in her rage. All womanhood for the time being seemed to have left her. As the thought of the great pride she had taken in building the stables and furnishing

her residence so that it was the talk of Oxton, dawned upon her, her fury knew no bounds. She shrieked, screamed and tore at her husband, time and again exclaiming, "Oh, my beautiful home to be taken away from me!"

Mrs. Robinson never for a moment thought of the great distress that her husband had caused the people of whom he had borrowed the money to conduct his speculations in the stock market. When he had told her how sorry he was for losing the money that Jenkins had placed with him to invest for his niece, she never gave it a moment's thought; nor did she care what distress had been caused quite a number of the families in Oxton who had invested their money along with her husband in the stock. Some of these people had placed all the money they had in the world in the hands of Robinson to invest for them after he had made his first *coup de main* in the Jack-Pot stock; and, in the case of maiden ladies, in several instances, the victims of the mining swindle would be compelled to exist on the kindness of their friends or relations for the remainder of their lives. All this Mrs. Robinson cared nothing about. She thought only of the great triumphs her enemies would have over her downfall.

The flatterers who had fawned upon Mrs. Robinson while she was holding the reins of social leadership always had something spicy to tell her at her afternoon teas about their neighbors, and which was not generally to their advantage. Now, at similar teas, the same people would discuss her downfall. The triumphs she had achieved; the grand rise she had made socially, she could not forget. Then she thought of the Earl of Dartmoor and other notables who had



lately been her guests; and to think that all this would be bandied about, drove this vain woman insane. Arising from the lounge and arranging her hair, she commenced to pace up and down the room.

No; it must not be. She could not survive the humiliation. Had not the Earl requested, when she was coming away, that if he could be of any assistance to her she should let him know? Besides, there was Rushton, ever ready, if Ruth would only say the word, to marry her; and with his millions she would still retain the social leadership. No, she would not give up. This must all be a terrible nightmare.

Seating herself in her chair, she rang the bell. When the maid appeared, she sent her to ask Mr. Robinson to come to her room.

When Robinson entered the room, she once more went over the situation. He listened very attentively until she had finished talking, then rising from his chair, said:

"My dear, it would take all the Rushton and Dartmoor monies combined to straighten out this tangle. There is nothing for it; everything must go. I must go through the courts; and after they have relieved me from the bankruptcy proceedings, I'll begin once more at the bottom of the ladder."

When the house of cards that Mrs. Robinson had built came tumbling down on her head at the first discharge of the gun that her husband fired when he told her it would take the combined fortunes of Rushton and the Earl to make good his losses, and she realized that she was, literally speaking, a pauper, she collapsed completely—her nerves unstrung—the volcano had burned itself out.



CHAPTER LX.

AFTER the usual preliminaries in the courts, Robinson's real estate, which consisted of the Robinson residence; also the stables and two lots adjoining which Robinson had bought on the advice of his wife to prevent any one from building so close to them, was immediately put up for auction and bought in by the mortgagees; and as the doleful taps of the auctioneer's hammer ceased, Mrs. Robinson, who was present, realized that her days and nights of labor in making her residence the finest in Oxtou, had been, as it were, a dream.

Crushed inwardly, but outwardly stern and unrelenting, Mrs. Robinson saw she could do nothing, and must submit to the inevitable; then, true to her disposition, she assumed a bold and defiant manner. She knew the world—at least, her world. Everything in time was overlooked but poverty. The preacher could rant and rave about us all being God's creatures; about equality and all that sort of thing; but the aristocrat was the aristocrat, and would not under any conditions intermingle nor make an equal of the poor with whom he came in contact. No one knew this better than Mrs. Robinson. If she could have boarded a steamer with her trunks and what few things she could save from the wreck, she would have done so. Quite a number of people called to sympathize with her. With a sarcastic smile on her countenance, she could not have treated them worse if they had been her sworn enemies. In the presence of these women she was as a



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rod of steel. She put them all down as coming under the pretense of friendship, while their real mission was to gloat over her downfall.

The wives of several of the men who were all but ruined by the bankruptcy of Robinson, called upon her and shed copious tears. She did not try in the least to comfort them in any way; but turned on them with such withering scorn that they were glad to beat a retreat from the Robinson residence. She gave them to understand that it was not for the love of Robinson that they had invested their money in Jack-Pot stock, and if they had thought for one moment they would not have made plenty of money out of the deal, they never would have put a pound into it.

Mrs. Robinson had steeled her heart against her husband and everybody in the world. In her eyes her husband was a fool. She did not understand how he had to give that blanket mortgage before the people would endorse his notes. In her opinion it was a stupid affair on the part of her husband all the way through. Some people could fail and make money; but her husband had failed, and like a fool gave his creditors everything. No man would ever have the power to sell the roof over her head again. Her eyes were opened. This would be the lesson of her life.



CHAPTER LXI.

IT IS the day of the sale of the Robinson household goods. The auctioneers are on hand. All the residents of Oxton have received from these gentlemen a catalogue itemizing everything in the Robinson residence.

The night before the sale, Mrs. Robinson, with her personal effects, moved to the parsonage, the residence of her brother, the Rev. Charles Anderson, where we leave her to the wormwood of her thoughts for the present, and go on with the sale of the goods she has paid for with such a lavish hand.

When the sale commenced there was one true friend of the Robinsons who stood there with bowed head, catalogue in hand. He was near the auctioneer, having gotten as close as possible, and as the numerous articles were put up for sale, he, with the gentlest of nods, would bid on those he could afford to buy, then would pause and reckon the amount he had purchased. His bank account was limited; but he intended to buy as many of the goods as he could until it was exhausted. It was Ruth's uncle, the Rev. Charles Anderson.

The great notoriety the Robinsons had attained attracted to the sale most of the residents of Oxton. This was the spiciest and most sublime moment in the lives of some of these people. One woman was heard to exclaim to another:

"This is what comes to upstarts. I expected this would happen. Well, I will buy something to keep



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as a souvenir of the time she imagined she had snubbed me by not inviting me to one of her parties. I wonder what the Earl will think of all this. I say, mustn't it have been galling to her at the time of the crash to be visiting at the Dartmoors' and mingling with the titled gentry? However, she will now have plenty of food for reflection, mirrored in her mind as it undoubtedly is, with the events of the past year."

This, and gossip of like nature, was going the rounds of these society people at the sale. Quite a number of the fair ladies who were in attendance would have been a little more charitable had they known that it was only by leniency shown to their husbands, by some of the people holding their notes, that saved them from the same fate as the Robinsons.

The smart set of Oxton, dressed in their gayest costumes, attended the sale in such numbers that all it required to make it a society function was a few pots of tea and some lackeys to wait on them.

While there were many kind people who attended this sale, and who had great sympathy for the Robinsons, there was no inconsiderable number who were there to gloat over Mrs. Robinson's downfall; and as each piece of furniture was auctioned off, this latter class gave out murmurings of mock pity.

All of the furniture brought fancy prices. Some of the residents bought for the satisfaction of saying, "I purchased this from the sale of the Robinsons when they were sold out."

If the people whom Robinson had wined and dined had banded together they could have bought a part of the furniture for him. The amount would not have been very large among so many. But the so-called

friends who had drunk Robinson's wine, and smoked his cigars, never came near him; no, they were afraid he might want some accommodation. They teach "Love one another," but in reality it is the survival of the fittest. These Christian friends of the Robinsons', after tearing to tatters every shred of gossip about them, would be at the fashionable church on Sunday chanting psalms to their Maker, and repeating the old Biblical phrases in the same mechanical manner, without a thought that the Robinsons ever existed, and some without a thought of the meaning of the words they were chanting. Society—society—dear society—how angelic you are.

The world had suddenly changed for Robinson. He saw his late friends in southern climes, while he froze in the arctic circle.

The Reverend Charles Anderson had rented a cottage in a short street running from Poplar Road to Rose Mount, Oxtou, and with the goods purchased from the sale, furnished it in a modest but comfortable manner for the Robinsons.

When Robinson was cleared from the bankruptcy proceedings, he told his creditors that he knew he would make enough money before he died to pay them back all the money they had lost through his speculations; but it was the general opinion among the business men of Liverpool that Robinson would have his nose on the grindstone for the remainder of his life. He had offered to pay off some of his debts with Jack-Pot stock, but his creditors would have none of it; they were afraid of assessments and various other expenses that were attached to holding stock with such a reputation as the Jack-Pot.



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Robinson carefully put away the stock with a firm determination that if he ever got enough money, he would engage a mining engineer and go out to the mine and find out its possible worth as an investment. He knew that the history of the mine, except this last swindle, was a good one. It had always paid large dividends until it became flooded. He was satisfied that if it was pumped out, it would pay a fortune to all who put their money into it.

In this age of rush, push, gush and swindle, the Robinson failure in two weeks was forgotten, except by those who lost their money by it.

Robinson has come down from his lofty perch, and once more taken up his old grind at the bottom of the ladder. He was somewhat of a philosopher in his way, and if it had not been for the loss of the money Jenkins gave him to invest for his niece, he would not have been so apparently crushed. When at times he forgot the loss of this money, the lines about his mouth would relax, giving place to a smile.

"By Jove!" he would exclaim. "I gave them a merry time while it lasted; I've got the stock, and I'll investigate that mine; and as she was the best paying investment that was ever worked, I believe if I can get it pumped out there will be more money made out of it than any mine in the States."

Nothing could keep Robinson down. He was a firm believer in the saying that "Every cloud has a silver lining." The only difference with Robinson was, all his clouds had gold linings. Robinson would never again be the conservative lawyer he formerly was. This stock speculation had changed him; he was now an optimist.

Whenever Robinson became acquainted with any person whom he thought had money, or could get people interested who had, he would commence once more to boom Jack-Pot stock. He would show how this mine had been the best paying investment in the States before it became flooded, and enlarge on the possibilities of them all becoming millionaires. He was forever buttonholing people, and whenever any of the business men saw him approaching, they invariably said:

“Look out! Here comes ‘Old Jack-Pot’.”



CHAPTER LXII.

ROBINSON at this time was in the depths of despair at the constant nagging of his wife as to when he was going to begin to make some money; and did he think his family were chameleons and could live on air? He had tried all his optimistic visions on his wife, but to no effect. With Mrs. Robinson, facts were facts, and money was money, and when night came, if the day had gone against him, he dreaded going home.

Since it had been made public how Robinson had used the money of Jenkins' niece in his stock speculations, no one would trust him with any of their business. This niece of Jenkins', prior to the Robinson failure, had innumerable admirers. She was then an heiress, and her suitors, who protested that they could not live without her, and swore by their Maker in the most honeyed words that it was her own dear self they worshipped, and their sole aim and object was to make her life a bed of roses—her money was as nothing to them; if she hadn't a dollar in the world, so much the better, as it would then prove the truth of their assertions. Alas! When her money took flight in the Robinson smash-up, so did her ardent admirers—vanished as if by magic. She was well rid of such vultures; and let us hope in her journey through life she will find a mate who will love her for her womanly virtues alone.

On Sabbath days, after Sunday school was over, Ruth and her uncle generally returned to the parson-

age, and as they drank their afternoon tea, invariably talked of the absent Captain. They had both read his letters many times, but when alone would read them over again. He had written to them at every opportunity, but for the past five months no letter had arrived. Whenever Ruth would hint at something happening the Captain, the Doctor would brush it aside, and show statistics to the effect that the percentage among soldiers killed was not so great as people imagined. But when alone how fervently he prayed to his Maker for the safe return of Captain Hardesty, no one but the Almighty ever knew. He knew, should anything happen to the Captain, Ruth's nature was such that there would be great danger of her pining away.

The Boers were forever ambushing the unwary Britons, who, with their old-time idea of bravery, were constantly running into the traps set by the wily foe. Generally, on the such occasions, the British, instead of surrendering when there was no possible chance of either escaping or defeating the Boers, would fight, which usually ended in a great many of them being killed. The Doctor, knowing the Captain's bravery, was afraid he either had been killed or had fallen into one of the many Boer traps and held as prisoner by them. He never went out any more in the morning until the postman had delivered the mail. When it arrived, both Ruth and he would eagerly scan the envelopes to see if there was one from the Captain; not seeing any, their eyes would meet, causing an embarrassing moment or two; both recognizing the fact—but not daring to breathe it in words—that, considering how constantly the Captain had written,



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it looked grave. They both had their own thoughts.

"I suppose the little general (meaning Lord Roberts), won't allow any mail to go through the lines; but you can depend upon it, Ruth, that there'll be a letter in a week at least."

Another week, then two, then a month passed; still no letter. Then came the terrible blunder of Spion's Kop; and among the list of the missing was the Captain's name.

Ruth's uncle was in Liverpool when he read the news of the disaster; and knowing that the papers with the Captain's name in them would be at the parsonage before he returned, was almost afraid to go home.

Giving up all idea of attending to what business he had on hand, the Doctor called a cab and was driven to the James street underground station, and soon arrived at the parsonage. Letting himself in with his latchkey, he quickly walked through the rooms calling Ruth. Not seeing her, and getting no answer, he thought possibly she had not seen the papers, and was out taking a walk; but on returning to the parlor, there was the paper, with its glaring headlines. The sheet with the account of the disaster had been handled, and the other part not touched—and what were these spots of moisture on the paper? Ah, not the least doubt of it—she had read the account of the battle and could not hold back the tears.

Throwing the paper down, the Doctor rushed upstairs and knocked gently on Ruth's door. No answer. He knocked again a little louder, and thought he heard some one sobbing. It was Ruth, who had retreated to her room.

Trying her best to suppress the great grief she was enduring, she approached the door.

"Is that you, uncle?"

"Yes, Ruth; I want to speak to you."

"I'll be down in a very little time; please wait for me there."

"If you're not down in five minutes, I shall come after you."

Ruth's grief was so intense that her eyes, as she entered the Doctor's study, were inflamed and very red.

The Doctor approached her as she entered the room, and putting his arm around her waist in a fatherly manner, said:

"My child, I know you have read the terrible news, but we must put our trust in the Lord and hope for the best. There is one thing, Ruth, thank God,—you notice in the paper that the Captain's name is not among the list of killed or wounded, but among those missing. I take it to be that he is a prisoner among the Boers, and from all accounts that have been published about them, they treat their prisoners in the most gentle manner."

After these kind, reassuring words, Ruth seemed somewhat to recover her spirits, and once more going to her room, prayed for the safety of the one whom above all others she loved best in the world.

Two weeks after the battle on Spion's Kop, a detachment of lancers reconnoitering, captured part of a Boer command. Among them was a man wearing the tunic of a British officer of a foot regiment. Upon being questioned as to where he procured it, he said that he was one of a burial party after the battle on



Spion's Kop, and had taken the tunic from the body of a dead officer he had assisted in burying. Upon being further questioned as to whether there were any papers in the pockets of the dead man, he said there were, at the same time delivering to the officer a small package of letters.

When the officer in command of the lancers returned to camp, he handed the papers to the Colonel of the regiment. The Colonel, on opening the package and examining the contents, discovered, entwined around the inside of the case of a miniature portrait, a small lock of hair. It was the lock of hair that Captain Hardesty had cut from Ruth's head the morning he left her for the seat of war.

Colonel Barry, soldier as he was, a man who had seen service in all parts of the British Empire—having been with Roberts in the Afghan campaign, and again with Kitchener in Egypt, besides innumerable brushes with savage tribes—could not keep back the moisture that came to his eyes when he opened the little package. Part of the papers Colonel Barry could not read, as the blood in drying had bound them together as if glued. Upon a closer examination of the papers he saw a few lines to the effect that in case anything should happen to the owner, the finder would please notify the Reverend Charles Anderson, of Oxton, Birkenhead, England. The Colonel, knowing that there were several officers wounded so badly that there was no possible chance of them fighting again during the war, and that they would at once be invalided back to England, decided to send the Captain's effects by one of them.

When the officer arrived in London he immediately wrote to the Reverend Anderson, acquainting him with all the facts of the Captain's death, and asking if he should send on the tunic and papers. The Doctor answered by wire, telling the officer to send them on. He wanted to see them. Nothing that had belonged to the Captain could be too ghastly for him to see. If God had seen fit that his friend should be stricken down, he would abide by His decision, but what earthly effects the Captain had left, however ghastly, he would see.

When the parcel containing the Captain's tunic arrived at the parsonage, the Doctor, who as a true clergyman had seen all sides of life; marriages, christenings, and the last of us all—the death-bed scenes—everything that a good parish minister sees in the daily rounds of his calling; and used as he was to the sad side of life, was nevertheless greatly shocked at the gruesome relics. There was the tunic that the Captain had worn, the inside next to the heart caked, cogulated with the blood of the dear fellow. Opening the small package of letters, he found the miniature of himself and Ruth, entwined with a lock of her hair. The sight of the blood-stained tokens brought back vividly to the mind of the Doctor the scenes and incidents at the parsonage previous to the departure of the Captain for the war, and now that the poor fellow was gone forever, it stirred his sympathetic nature to such a degree as to completely unman him, as he threw himself on the lounge, shedding manly tears.

Calming himself, he arose and wrapped the relics of barbarous warfare in the covering in which they



had come, and handling them in a reverential manner, locked them in his closet.

As the Doctor came out of his study he met Ruth, who as yet knew nothing of the arrival of the Captain's effects. He felt guilty at keeping from her the knowledge of the poor fellow's death, but his kindly nature was such that he had not the heart to tell her. He loved her with a pure, unselfish love, free from any taint of reward, expecting no recompense, but striving at all times to make her life as happy as possible for a human life to be.

Ruth had given Captain Hardesty all the strong and holy love that her pure heart possessed. Would she survive the news of his death? Would it be right to hide it from her and let her go on in her happy ignorance, thinking that some day he would return to her fond, loving heart? The Doctor was never in such a dilemma in his life. God knew that he was ready and willing at all times to do that which was right; but would it be best to acquaint her with the sad news of the Captain's death? No, he would not. He had not the heart to do anything that would bring sorrow to her young heart. He knew her nature so well that while he did not expect her to give way to any great external emotion, he knew that there was danger that the news of the death of her lover would create a slow, lingering fire which in time would consume her. Her love for her lover was her life; he was as necessary to her existence as the air she breathed. Would he be her executioner? Better, he reasoned, by far, for her, gradually and slowly to become used to the idea that the Captain was dead, than

for him to destroy that fair young life by telling her the naked truth.

The good man's conscience gave him no rest. When Ruth would ask his opinion about the Captain, if he thought they could do any good by writing to the war office, and if he knew anything more than she had read in the papers about the way the Boers treated their prisoners, he always felt guilty when replying to her, and dreaded the coming of the day when he would have to make a clean breast of the knowledge he possessed. To a man of the Doctor's temperament, this well-meant deception was something he could not get used to, and he was often on the verge of making a clean breast of the whole affair; then again, he was fearful of the result.



CHAPTER LXIV.

WHEN the report came of Captain Hardesty being missing, Mrs. Robinson was so elated that it was hard, even for her, who was a past mistress in the art of dissimulation, to feign sorrow.

Going to her daughter, she told her with honeyed words how sorry she was to hear of the death of the poor Captain; and that while she had never known him very well, she was shocked to hear of the poor fellow being killed in battle. She embraced Ruth, kissing her, as she told her it was God's will to call the dear, brave Captain to heaven. She talked so kindly and shed such crocodile tears that Ruth in her pure, innocent faith embraced her mother, telling her how kind it was to show such sympathy; and that if her mother had only known the Captain better, she was sure she would never have had such hard feelings against him.

Mrs. Robinson told Ruth she could now see her mistake; but had been jealous only for her daughter's welfare, and hoped Ruth would forgive her, and they would now both join in their prayers to God to give Ruth strength to overcome the misery which his death had entailed on her.

Ruth, once more embracing her mother for her kindness in showing such sympathy on her behalf, said:

"Mother, dear, do you know, that no matter what the papers or anybody else may say about Captain Hardesty being dead, I can never bring myself to realize that he is; and oh, mother, last night in my dreams

I saw him as plainly as I see you now; he was lying on a sick-bed, and some irresistible power was drawing me away from him; and as I moved from him he cried in such pitiful tones, 'For heaven's sake, Ruth, don't leave me.' Mamma, it was the most realistic dream that I ever had in my life. I'm sure he's alive, because if his spirit had left his body, the affinity that exists between us would have made itself known to me; and except just for a moment, I've never felt in my heart he was dead."

"Why, dear, the papers said that he was missing at the time of the battle of Spion's Kop; and as that was six months ago, and no tidings have been heard of him since, I'm sure we must, no matter how poignant our grief, realize the fact that the poor fellow is dead."

Mrs. Robinson, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, here commenced to sob violently, shaking all over with emotion.

Ruth felt a little guilty for ever thinking, even for a moment that when her mother had urged her to give up the Captain there were other reasons besides the great love she had for her. Her innocent nature never for a moment suspected the hypocrisy of which her mother was guilty, and when in her innocence she told her mother she did not think the Captain was dead, she little thought of the home thrust she was dealing. Mrs. Robinson did not know, nor did she care, whether the Captain was alive or dead, if he could only be kept away from her daughter until she could marry her to Rushton.

The papers, the war office, and in fact everybody, said he was dead; if so, so much the better; for the

obstacle would then be removed (so she thought)—then the marriage between Rushton and her daughter would surely take place. If, as Ruth said, she was certain that the Captain was only being held a prisoner by the Boers, then the Boers would have her prayers night and morning to hold him as such, until she had devised some plan, in conjunction with Rushton, to bring about the wedding, as she was certain of his co-operation in anything whereby he could obtain the hand of her daughter.

Mrs. Robinson being a clever, brainy woman, read Rushton as if he were an open book. She knew that the divine inspiration of true, heavenly love was something unknown to a nature such as his. She also knew that he had set his heart, or his passion, on obtaining the possession, the custodianship, the right by law in marriage, of Ruth.

Man is so much imbued with animalism, that in his amorous passion he never stops to analyze his feelings; possibly believing at such times he is in love. The awakening, however, teaches him a lesson, but generally too late. So it was with Rushton. He wanted Ruth Robinson. He had feasted his eyes on her until her possession had become a mania with him. This great big, coarse, carnal piece of animalism had the temerity to call this all-devouring passion of his, LOVE. How the divine word has been tainted and polluted by such men. This man, Rushton, wanted Ruth Robinson as he wanted anything else that his money could purchase. He wanted her as he wanted a good dinner. Only that the state of our modern society might not tolerate it, he would have hired a band of procurers and sent them to bring her to his

residence that he might feast on her charms. Yet, this man persuaded himself that he was dying for the love of Ruth. It is safe to say that this great love which Rushton supposed he possessed for Ruth, should anything happen to her, would vanish the day after she died.



CHAPTER LXV.

THE Robinsons are gradually becoming poorer. The friendly, obsequious nods and handshakes, of which the once great Robinson had been the recipient, have vanished as if by magic.

At this time the officer who brought the Captain's effects from Africa received an invitation from Ruth's uncle to the effect that after he had recovered from his sickness he would be pleased to receive a visit from him. When he arrived, Mrs. Robinson happened to be at the parsonage visiting her brother, Ruth being absent. The Doctor introduced Mrs. Robinson, but did not state that she was Ruth's mother, as he did not wish Mrs. Robinson to question the Major about the death of the Captain—which caution availed him nothing, for the next moment the Major said :

“Tell me, Doctor, how did the young lady receive the news of the poor fellow's death? I need scarcely ask such a question; but is she recovering from the shock? I have often thought I should like to see her, and if you think it would be the means of doing any good, I would gladly tell her anything I know about the Captain. I was very much grieved each time I thought of the sad memories the Captain's effects would recall to you and her. I believe, though, his death was painless; as it appears from the tunic that he was shot through the heart. You of course noticed that, Doctor, in examining the effects.”

Mrs. Robinson's eyes had been flashing fire at the

Doctor during the conversation, and the Doctor, seeing no way out of the climax, said:

"Major Strong,—my sister (waving his hand in a gentle manner towards Mrs. Robinson), is the young lady's mother."

"Is your daughter, Mrs. Robinson, recovering from the dreadful shock that I know she must have received at hearing of the death of my dear comrade and brother officer?"

Instead of answering, Mrs. Robinson asked the Major a question:

"Am I to understand, Major Strong, that Captain Hardesty is dead beyond all doubt?"

The Major stared with somewhat of amazement at this question of Mrs. Robinson's; but the honest, kindly look in the Doctor's eyes disarmed him of any thought other than that the Captain's death had been kept back from a humane motive.

"Alas, Madame, I am deeply grieved to say 'tis only too true."

The Major here repeated the details of the death and burial of the Captain as narrated by the Boer prisoner.

The Doctor's brows contracted when his sister gazed at him with a sinister look as the Major finished his story of the Captain's death.

He knew that his sister was more than pleased when the news of the Captain's death was confirmed beyond all doubt.

"Have you told Ruth of the Captain's death, Charles?" queried Mrs. Robinson.

"No,—I have not."

"Why keep the child in suspense? Don't you think it better that she should know the worst, and not fret



her young life away, waiting for the dead to come to life?"

"I have my reasons, and will explain to you later," answered the Doctor.

At this point Mrs. Robinson arose to go, thanking the Major for his kindness in taking such an interest in her daughter's welfare.

When Mrs. Robinson had left, the Doctor gave the Major an outline of the state of affairs in regard to the courtship of Captain Hardesty and Ruth, at the same time stating his reasons for not acquainting her with the sad news of the Captain's death.

The Major stayed for dinner, and like the majority of men, at once became an ardent admirer of Ruth, who came in from her work at the mission just as dinner was announced.

The Doctor exacted a promise from the Major not to divulge the Captain's death, telling him that if it had not been for the fact that his sister, Ruth's mother, was present at the time the Major told the details of the Captain's death, he had intended to let Ruth drift on thinking some day the Captain would return; knowing that time would reveal the truth more gently than any human being; but now that her mother knew of it, he would have to break the sad news, for if he did not, her mother would.

As soon as Mrs. Robinson reached her home she wrote a letter to Rushton, asking him to call on her.

That night Mrs. Robinson and Rushton had a tete-a-tete in the little parlor of the Robinsons'. She told in detail about Major Strong's visit, and further, that Ruth had often said if anything should happen to the Captain, and Mr. Rushton should propose, she would

feel honored at such an offer. Rushton was given the latter in a veiled manner. It was a falsehood manufactured out of whole cloth by Mrs. Robinson to give encouragement to Rushton in his pursuit of Ruth's hand. She further told him that on many occasions Ruth had mentioned to her how much she thought of him, that he was such an honorable gentleman, and so forth, and in an innuendo, ever so nicely worded, she hinted that Ruth had said if the Captain had not come into her life she supposed she would, ere this, have been Mrs. Rushton.

Rushton swallowed all this and in an underbreath cursed the Captain as he told Mrs. Robinson that Ruth might long since have been Mrs. R. if she had been sensible. He also told her that he had just received word from the London architect that his house was ready for occupancy.

"Now I've got the cage,—where's the bird?"

"Patience—patience,—my dear Rushton."

"Damn your patience. You women think that a man can bottle his hot blood—put it on ice—then bring it down when wanted, and, like wine, sip it.

"I tell you this daughter of yours is driving me crazy—you gave me to understand that you could bring this wedding about. What progress have either you or I made in the matter which means so much to both of us? I've told you that I'll see that Robinson has all the law practice of the brewery, and the day I marry Ruth, will give you the check for the amount I promised you. Here you are in absolute poverty, and can't get your daughter to say the word. If she don't make up her mind whether she will or she won't, I'll wipe my hands of the whole affair and join the I. V.,



as there is a new draft to be sent out next month, and the Colonel of the regiment is a personal friend of mine—then you'll be in poverty for the rest of your life."

Mrs. Robinson heard but paid no attention in the least to the vituperations of Rushton. She had more brains than a dozen such men as he. She knew there was no more possibility of Rushton going to Africa to fight the Boers than there was of her going. She also knew that he would never rest, day or night, until he had married Ruth or something happened that would make the wedding utterly impossible.

Rushton all his life had been pampered and petted, his wealth enabling him to humor every whim, and now the idea of this girl, without a dollar in the world, setting him, as it were, at defiance, was almost more than he could endure without making himself ridiculous. But his co-partner was equal to the occasion. This pilot guided and steered him clear of the shoals and anchored him where she thought he should be without his ever for a moment thinking he was being piloted.

Rushton was in that state of love sickness where a man of his disposition resembles a spoiled child more than anything else.

Mrs. Robinson had so smoothed his ruffled plumes and stroked his fur in a way to compensate him for the great anguish he supposed he was undergoing in his suit of unrequited love, that he went away from the Robinson residence quite mollified.

The death of Captain Hardesty acted like a tonic on Rushton; this, with the honeyed words that Mrs. Robinson had poured into his ears changed him to such an

extent that the people with whom he had been in contact ever since his refusal by Ruth were at a loss to know what had happened. Ruth's refusal had been the means of making life almost unbearable for those who were in the employment of Rushton. He fussed and fumed, discharged and swore, until the employees at the brewery thought the devil had been turned loose, and for the time being was making his rounds in the guise of Rushton. Now this morning, knowing that the Captain was dead, with Mrs. Robinson's honeyed words still ringing in his ears, this great big carcass of animalism tumbled out of the Rushton carriage at the office of the brewery like a man who had been suddenly released from prison. From one extreme he went to another. The men whose lives he had made miserable he treated in such a liberal manner that they were at a loss to understand it.

Mrs. Robinson and Rushton now decided to use all means possible to hasten the wedding. She invited Rushton to dine at the Robinson residence on the following Sunday, Ruth at once being notified of the fact. Since the death of Captain Hardesty had been assured by the Major's visit, Rushton sent to the Robinson residence each day choice flowers and grapes from his greenhouses. Under the guidance and composition of Mrs. Robinson, he wrote Ruth a letter of condolence, and hoped that with divine help she would have strength to bear the great loss she had sustained through the death of the Captain. He further stated that if he could be of any assistance in helping her with the missions she was to let him know; and that her slightest wish would be his pleasure.



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Mrs. Robinson in an adroit manner told Ruth that Rushton was to honor them by dining with them on the coming Sunday.

"I hope, Ruth dear, that you will try and make it as pleasant for him as you can."

"I'm afraid, mother, I won't be able to dine with you on Sunday, as my uncle expects some visitors and wishes me to assist him in entertaining them."

Mrs. Robinson was furious, but held back her wrath, and smiling pleasantly, said:

"Ruth, you must reconsider this matter, as it will be a great disappointment to both your father and me, for you know this visit of Mr. Rushton's means so much to us in our present straitened circumstances. As I told you, Ruth, Mr. Rushton, against all the great pressure that has been brought to bear on him to give the law practice of the Rushton business to others, has reserved it for your father; and as soon as the matter can be arranged, your father, thanks to Mr. Rushton, will have a law practice of at least a thousand a year. You surely will not stand out against the wishes of your father. He said last night before retiring that Ruth must do her best to entertain Mr. Rushton, as all young people like someone of their own age to chat with."

This was another of Mrs. Robinson's standard lies.

"I will ask my uncle to excuse me Sunday, mamma," answered Ruth.

"Do so, Ruth, as you know it would be a dreadful disappointment to Mr. Rushton if you were not to dine with him."

Ruth looked wonderingly at her mother.

Mrs. Robinson had been asked—nay, had been urged by her brother, the Doctor, not to tell Ruth of the proof they had of the Captain's death. The Doctor's reason for this, as he explained to his sister, was to give "Time," the great healer of all wounds, a chance to play its part. He argued with her that Ruth must in the course of time come to the conclusion that the Captain was dead. Her acquaintances would be continually asking her if she had heard anything about him, and on her replying in the negative, they would naturally ask her did she not think he had been killed in battle; and by such remarks being constantly made, she at last must come to realize the fact, however slowly at first,—that he must be dead, and it was in this slowness, the Doctor argued, the safety of his niece's health lay.

Mrs. Robinson would not listen to any such nonsense. It was all tomfoolery; besides she told her brother it was cruel to keep a young girl in suspense; better, she reasoned, to tell her at once.

"I'm afraid you do not understand Ruth as well as I do," exclaimed the Doctor. "I believe that if you tell her at the present time, of his death, it will be the means of ruining her health,—if it does not kill her. Understand, she is not an ordinary girl; she has put her whole heart, yes, her very life, as it were, on the safe return of the Captain. She is so unlike the average girl, that I'm sure you'll rue it to your dying day if you acquaint her with the details as you heard them from Major Strong; and as a last plea, sister, if you insist that she must be told, let me be the one to break the news to her."



"Charles, I shall have my own way in this matter. I don't believe in this nonsense of catering to the whims of love-stricken, inexperienced young girls. She's young, and has a good constitution, and will soon get over the death of this lover of hers. She's not the only girl whose lover has been killed in battle; and I don't want her to waste any more of her life waiting for the return of a dead man. It is time she married and settled down."

"I am sorry I cannot get you to come to my way of thinking, and believe if you acquaint her with the news of his death, she will either lose her reason or slowly pine away."

"The days are past, Charles, when young ladies did such foolish things. This is not the age of chivalry. The man who can furnish the finest dresses and the smartest equipages is the one whom the present day girls prefer, and if one man dies, there are plenty of others to take his place."

"Sister, you talk so lightly of the state of married life that you would have me believe it was merely a matter of shillings and pence, and that the fountain of all goodness—pure and holy love, which rules the world, just as sure as you and I are here at the present time, did not exist. I ask you, sister, have you forgotten your own girlhood days, and the time when James Robinson was paying court to you—did you then think that all men were the same? No, if I remember rightly, you defied all—father, mother, brother and sister, and all others who attempted to interfere with you in the man you had chosen to be your husband. I believed then, as I believe now,—you were right—love's young dream must be satis-

fied; and nothing in the world can take the place of the man whom a true and noble woman loves."

"Charles, you talk like a man of experience. How comes it that a bachelor and minister of the gospel can speak in such a practical way of a state he has never known?"

"Sister, I beseech you not to speak in such a frivolous manner of the sanctified state of marriage. You say I speak in a practical manner; all that I can say is, that the thought that any young girl should so pollute herself as to sacrifice for gold all the heavenly virtues she possesses by marrying a man whom she does not love, is for me too ignoble to understand."

"Your arguments are fine,—yes, very fine; but are you aware, Charles, that Ruth is now at her best? If you are not, I am. Now is the time for her to marry. I shall acquaint her with the facts of the Captain's death, as I think it wrong for her to go on each day waiting for news from a dead man."

Mrs. Robinson returned to her residence while her brother hurried out to search for Ruth. He knew she was visiting some of the poor parishioners, and his idea was (knowing the determination of his sister to do what she said she would) to bring her back to the parsonage and break the sad news to her of the Captain's death being an assured fact.

The Doctor was unsuccessful in his search and on returning home found that Ruth had gone to her mother's. He sat down with a heavy heart, knowing his sister would disclose the sad news to Ruth.

Mrs. Robinson, hearing the bell ring, told the maid if it was Ruth she wished to see her.



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As Ruth entered the room her mother arose, and embracing her daughter, kissed her several times, saying:

"My child, I have dreadful news for you, and while it grieves me to impart it, I consider it my duty as your mother to do so. I know, like the noble girl you are, that you will put your trust in God, and not question His doings. Tell me, dear, did your uncle say anything to you of what Major Strong told him about the death of Captain Hardesty?"

"No, mamma, not a word."

"Then, Ruth, be brave—for it's my painful duty to inform you that the night the Major dined with your uncle he brought the full particulars of the Captain's death."

If Mrs. Robinson expected Ruth to scream or faint she was very much disappointed; she simply stared at her mother without speaking, while her mother continued:

"Yes, child, the news he brought cannot be doubted. The poor fellow is dead and buried on the battle-field where he fell. The Major, it seems, sent to your uncle the tunic Captain Hardesty wore at the time he was killed, and it is now in his possession; also the little photograph of yourself and Uncle Charles which Captain Hardesty had in his pocket when he was shot down. Oh, Ruth, Ruth,—this is terrible news for you to bear, my child; but you must have courage. I insisted on the Doctor showing me the Captain's effects; they were horrible to behold—all besmeared and coagulated with the poor fellow's life's blood. I do hope that your uncle will never allow you to see them."

Mrs. Robinson could stand the pressure no longer, and the crocodile tears flowed freely, while between sobs she lamented the sad fate of the Captain. Perhaps it was as well that she did not give her brother, the Doctor, the privilege of breaking the news, as with all his kindness it would have been impossible for him to be more sympathetic in the part that his sister played in breaking the news to her daughter.

Like an automaton Ruth arose from her chair, and in answer to her mother, said:

"I know it appears like going in the face of Providence not to believe that the Captain is dead; but with all the evidence you say my uncle has, my heart, mother, tells me he lives."

Mrs. Robinson perhaps for the first time in her life was completely nonplussed. She thought she had noticed Ruth acting a little strange; now, she was sure of it—her daughter's mind was unbalanced. Her first thoughts were not for the sad fate which she believed had befallen her daughter, but that Rushton might notice it; then what would be their future prospects for the remainder of their lives? This wedding must take place at once.

"Ruth, dear, promise your mother one thing,—that, under no circumstance will you ever repeat to a living soul what you have just said about the Captain being alive—think what you will, but for the love of those you hold dear, don't repeat your thoughts. You know, my child, that if it were noised around that Ruth Robinson would not believe in the death of her lover, with the evidence we have of his death, what would the people say? Ruth, it shocks me to think of it, but



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whenever they saw you they would tap their foreheads and nod their heads—”

“There is one thing, Ruth, that I hope you will do for your dear father’s sake, to say nothing of mine; that is, if Mr. Rushton should once more press his suit you will at least extend to him your sympathy if you cannot give him at the present time your affection. You see, Ruth, that ever since you cast him off, while there has been a score of young girls trying to capture him, he has been true to the memory of his first love. Reports say that since Ruth Robinson refused him the poor fellow has been a recluse. While you are entirely blameless in the matter, you have at the same time been the cause of wrecking the life of one of the finest young gentlemen in all England.

You know, Ruth, how miserably poor we are, and the other evening when Mr. Rushton called he told your father that he had made arrangements for him to take charge of the law work of the Rushton brewery, which your father states will bring him almost a thousand a year. Just think of it, Ruth! From absolute poverty to a position where there’ll be no more pinching and contriving as to the cheapest kind of a dinner for Sunday. Now that Captain Hardesty is dead you will not by any means be false in trying, just a little, to please this good, kind, noble fellow, who through all our suffering and poverty has remained steadfast and true.”

Mrs. Robinson finished her oration with a flourish of trumpets on behalf of the noble fellow, Rushton.

How pleasant when our hearts are in the work we undertake—and how much more pleasant when we receive for such work a good price for doing it. Yes, reader, Mrs. Robinson had received so much down—

and the balance when the wedding should take place. She had now a modest account in one of the smaller banks, which we may rest assured her dear husband and daughter will never know anything about.

When Mrs. Robinson ceased speaking, Ruth, answering, said:

"Mother, you may always depend upon my doing that which is right; and I shall continue to treat Mr. Rushton as I hope I always have, and that is as a lady should treat a gentleman who is a friend of her family. Do you think, mother, that the report of Captain Hardesty's death has anything to do with Mr. Rushton wanting to assist me in the mission work? How did it come about that he proposed to give father part of the law business of the Rushton concern?"

"Ruth, I'm glad you asked me that question—and while I can't answer it, as I know nothing positively on which to base my answer, I think we can see a little into the noble spirit of this man. In my opinion I should not wonder if he once more tried to win your affection. You see, Ruth, while Captain Hardesty lived, the noble fellow kept severely away from you, though I have heard he almost became insane after you refused him—neglected his business—refused to see any of his friends, and became almost a wreck, on your account. The doctors could do nothing for him, and his father was afraid he might lose his reason. Now, the great love which he has for you, has prompted him to do that which his honor and nobility of character would not allow him to do before, for fear you might think he was trying with his great wealth to win your affection away from the Captain. No, Ruth, I believe Mr. Rushton would have come to



our aid long before, only that he was afraid you might misconstrue his intentions. I ask you, Ruth, if there is anything strange, now that he has heard Captain Hardesty is dead, if he should once more try to win your love? No matter what you might say to the contrary, in my opinion he has a perfect right. The situation is an ordinary one. When you rejected him you had a lover. That lover is now dead. This man has been true to the memory of the days when he supposed he was basking in the sunshine of your affection. He was mistaken at the time in thinking that you loved him; he is not the only man who has made that mistake. When he heard of the collapse of the mine, and that ruin was staring us in the face, did he act like the rest of the cravens? No, he did not, but like the gentleman he is, came forward and offered pecuniary aid. Did any of the other fair-weather friends do the same? In my opinion, Ruth, there does not exist a finer and more honorable gentleman in all England than Mr. Rushton.

Mrs. Robinson in sounding the praise of Rushton to her daughter very naturally left out all the liasons in which this great, coarse fellow had been embroiled, which began when he was little more than a boy and had continued with very little interruption to the present time. Ruth's uncle knew of his licentiousness, and had a horror of the man; and believed in his heart that it was on account of the pure and spotless reputation of Ruth that he wished to possess her.

"Mother, what you say about Mr. Rushton may all be true; but if I had the least idea that he would ever importune me to marry him, I should never allow him to assist me in the mission work. While I should be



very sorry for the sake of the poor to do anything that would be the means of depriving them of any benefits which would be likely to come to them through Mr. Rushton's assistance, still the sacrifice would have to be made. The newspapers and all the world can say that the Captain is dead; but unless that subtle something, which I cannot express, tells me he is no more, I shall still continue to believe he lives."



CHAPTER LXVI.

MRS. ROBINSON, after her last interview with Rushton, engaged a neat appearing waitress. There is also evidence of renewed life from some pecuniary quarter that has been foreign to the Robinson residence for the past year. The butcher, baker, grocer, and all the small tradesmen were seen a great deal oftener than for some time past.

These small tradesmen are the first to know when anything out of the ordinary occurs in any of our families. So it was with the Robinsons. Mrs. Robinson had sent back during the past week some articles to these tradesmen that did not suit her. "It is easy to see," said Wilson, the butcher, "that she is paying cash once more for what she gets. When we had to wait six months for our money she never sent anything back."

As the wagons of these tradesmen called with their goods at the Robinson residence, the neighbors wondered where Mrs. Robinson had found the philosophers' stone.

Robinson, when he had been served with his first meal by the new waitress, said to his better half:

"My dear, where did you get the goose that is laying the golden eggs?"

"I think, James, if I can give you a little better than you have been having for the past year, you ought to be satisfied without asking too many questions. One thing I will tell you, and that is, I am paying for what I buy, and there'll be no aftermath."

This last sentence with a sinister look at her husband was a stunning blow for Robinson, and he decided to say no more on the subject.

Robinson had more than a suspicion that his wife was using Ruth as a bait to procure money from Rushton. He also knew that Rushton would only be too willing to give his wife all the money she needed if it would help him in his love affair with Ruth. He was powerless in the matter. If he challenged his wife she'd deny it. The same query applied to Rushton. If he made any noise whatever about it, it would only be the means of his wife being more secret and not allowing him to see any of the signs of prosperity. All that he could do was to keep quiet and, with eyes open, wait for developments.

While Robinson would not allow Ruth to be coerced in any way, still now that this soldier fellow was dead, he thought she could do worse than marry Rushton. He was sick of the bickerings he had to stand with his wife, and if Rushton married his daughter, he supposed he would do something handsome for the Robinson family. It had been settled, he'd been given to understand, that after the first of the year he was to take hold of the Rushton law business; but nothing definite had been done to make it a sure thing. He knew perfectly well that if Ruth kicked over the traces with young Rushton, he would never get their business. From his experience of the world that was his opinion; and all that he could do was to hope that Ruth would marry him. "But I'll have nothing to do with it; let them fight it out among themselves; I've stood enough the last year to last a man a life-time; if she'll not marry him I can worry along to the



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end, as before many more years all the trouble and worry will be over."

Rushton had wanted for a long time to stake Robinson to some wine and cigars; but knowing what an independent man he had to deal with was at a loss to do so without hurting Robinson's feelings. Now that he had been invited to dine at the Robinsons', he would be able to send enough wine and cigars to last the old gentleman a year. While Rushton thought he was having his own way in everything, he was merely a tool in this clever woman's hands. With his vulgar idea that money could buy anything and everything in this world; with his arrogant and supercilious ways, he would have insulted Robinson by sending him the cigars as to a pauper; with the result that he would never again be allowed to enter the Robinson residence. So he wisely left all arrangements to his co-partner in the scheme they had on hand to bring about the marriage.

The little dining room at the Robinson residence, tastefully arranged with flowers and evergreens, never looked prettier than it did when dinner was announced on the following Sunday. This was the auspicious day when Rushton was to renew his courtship of Ruth.

Both Mrs. Robinson and Rushton had agreed that it would be good policy during the dinner not to discuss the Captain or the Boer war; but to turn the conversation on charity—sweet charity. This they knew would at once be the means of gaining the attention and confidence of Ruth. They had both, so Rushton thought, spent considerable time in mapping out their plans and making the arrangements for this little dinner.

Rushton having a friend who was about to be married, and one in whom he could place confidence, invited him and his fiance to the dinner, the idea being to boom the Rushton stock in an adroit and clever manner.

As the dinner proceeded, and the subject of charity was discussed in such a generous spirit, Ruth for the first time in many months became animated in the conversation, and began to think that there were a great many kind-hearted people in the world who would devote their time and money to charity if they had some one to bring the matter before them.

While the dinner was progressing, Rushton's footman was hobnobbing with Mrs. Robinson's cook, and, over a bottle of Bass, was discussing the latest gossip of the Rushton residence. The cook reciprocated and gave in exchange the latest tidbits of the Robinson establishment. Rushton had given his footman orders to ride to the Robinsons' on his wheel, and before starting to give the groom orders to have the bay team harnessed ready to hitch up should they be wanted. Mrs. Robinson was to inform him if Ruth gave her consent to go driving.

Among the better class of the English people it is not considered good form to go driving on the Sabbath; but Rushton was in that state where reason and discretion were thrown to the winds; and if he could only cater to the whim of Ruth, he cared not what other people thought. If she would consent to go driving, Sunday or not, driving they would go. He knew Ruth's religious scruples, otherwise he would have had the carriage sent.



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This dinner passed off as all such functions do where the sole aim and object of the parties is to try and please another.

Robinson couldn't help but smile at the great earnestness that Rushton and his friends displayed on the subject of charity. They talked of organizing a charitable aid society, and of making Robinson president. At this suggestion of Rushton's, Robinson roared. Upon questioning him as to the cause of his mirth, he replied:

"Considering what I've passed through during the last year, the people would say, 'My, that old rascal Robinson is surely playing the saint to get the confidence of the people, then he will work up another mining scheme to fleece them out of their dollars.'"

"You're too hard on yourself, Robinson," exclaimed Rushton; but they all laughed heartily over Robinson's view of Rushton's suggestion. To give Rushton credit for one thing, when he made the suggestion he for the moment forgot all about Robinson's recent troubles, and was saying anything and everything that he thought would please Ruth.

After dinner was over they adjourned to the little parlor, Rushton insisting that Ruth should sing one of her favorite hymns.

As the little party took their seats, Ruth opened the piano and sang "Nearer My God to Thee" with such pathos and deep feeling depicted on her face, that while Rushton and his friends at heart were merely lukewarm Christians, they for the time being, appeared to come under the spell of the singer. It was the earnestness that Ruth put into the words, combined with her ideal conception of the meaning of the hymn,

—this with her trained voice made it impressive and sacred. She finished by singing "Abide with me", Rushton whispering to his friend that he was "willing".

When the singing was over, Rushton dwelt upon the day being just right for a drive, as in his opinion it was a little too warm for walking.

Ruth politely but firmly refused, and hoped he would not be annoyed at her refusal.

She said, however, she had no objection in the least to walking, and, with one of her oldtime smiles, said:

"I hope you will make it a long one, Mr. Rushton, as my uncle has been so very busy lately that I have not had a good walk for some time."

"I shall do my best to please you, Ruth, and hope our friends will not cry 'Enough' before you're satisfied."

Rushton lost no time in telling Mrs. Robinson that the team would not be wanted; but that Ruth had consented to go for a ramble through the country.

The party having donned their wraps laughingly left the Robinson residence, leaving Robinson and his wife to discuss the prospects of an early marriage between Ruth and Rushton.

"James, I think it will be a match this time," said Mrs. Robinson.

"I don't know, I'm sure; she's a hard girl to handle, is Miss Ruth."

"She cannot do better; and where in all England will you find another Rushton? He's been true to us all through our troubles, and to-day is willing to take Ruth without a shilling to her name."

"Well, my dear, if she will, she will,—and if she won't, she won't; and that's all there is to it. We can't make her marry him."

Mrs. Robinson did not take her husband's view of the situation; she was sure that with the co-operation of Rushton, and with the aid of Rushton's money, she had brains enough to concoct a plot or scheme of some kind that would leave nothing else for Ruth to do but to marry him. She would never sleep another night in peace until she had formed this plan, whatever it was to be, and she was as sure as she lived that she would have Ruth married before the first of the year, which would insure her husband getting the Rushton law patronage.

When the party left the house, Ruth and Rushton led the way; and the ease with which she reeled off the miles as they journeyed through the country was such that Miss Talbot asked, after being admonished by her escort once or twice, "If Ruth was going to walk all night; and how she expected her to get back, as she was already quite fatigued."

Ruth apologized and hoped that Miss Talbot would not be distressed at the return journey.

Both Rushton and his friend were not at all sorry, as they were both lazy dogs; but would have died before mentioning the fact to Ruth that they were tired.

When the party returned home it was settled that Rushton was to join Ruth in the mission work; and if nothing else ever came of his courtship, the people who attended the missions would be well taken care of while it lasted.

The missions were situated one in Tranmere Vale, the other in Watson street, both in the borough of

Birkenhead. The reader must not construe from the name Tranmere Vale that this is descriptive of a rustic pleasure ground; but must picture a neighborhood of poverty and squalor, while the neighborhood where the Watson street mission is situated, is, if anything, more wretched.

Calling at the Tranmere mission one day as he was returning from his office a little earlier than usual, and not finding Ruth there he was informed by the woman in charge that she was at the mission house in Watson street. Rushton had never been to this mission house, and as he had dismissed his carriage with the intention of walking home with Ruth, he called a cab and gave the driver orders to proceed to the above address. Arriving there, the squalid aspect of the place, with its filth and rank odor that seemed to permeate the very atmosphere, was such that Rushton was thinking seriously of immediately returning and having his clothes fumigated.

He was informed on inquiring by the woman in charge that "The good lady (Ruth) was at the house of a certain Mrs. McNamara, who was very sick, and that the dear lady,—the blessings of God on her—had taken the sick woman some jelly."

Rushton on inquiring where this woman lived whom Ruth was visiting, was answered by a score of the most ragged and dirty urchins, whose appearance it would be difficult to describe. A carriage never being seen in this neighborhood, except at a funeral, this band of street gamins had surrounded Rushton immediately on the cab being drawn up at the mission house. As he was listening to the directions the woman was giving him as to Ruth's whereabouts, these



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small boys bounded in front of him, exclaiming in chorus :

"Come on, mister, we'll show you where de lady is."

Rushton followed these boys, who, though shoeless and hatless seemed pictures of health, and as he trailed in their wake did not know whether to smile or scowl at the predicament he was in. He was intent on watching the leader, when the boy suddenly disappeared through a tunnel-like passage, like an arch covering a sewer. This passage led into a court. Still following the band of scouts, he was led up a flight of rickety stairs, which at every step he was afraid he would fall through. At the top of the landing the leading boy said :

"This is de place, Mister, where de lady is."

At this time the landing that Rushton stood on was packed to the limit by these small boys, and as far as he could see the stairway leading to it was jammed with the rest of the followers, who amidst their quarreling to get through created the greatest uproar. Rushton, who was fast losing his patience, at this stage was confronted by the woman whom Ruth had hired to look after the sick woman, Mrs. McNamara. She had opened the door to find out the cause of the commotion, and as she did so he made his escape to where Ruth was sitting by the bedside of the sick woman. While Ruth was commenting on his kindness in taking such an interest in the mission work, the commotion on the landing where the woman was trying her best to send the boys away, had turned to the most terrific din imaginable. Ruth, fearful lest the noise should annoy the sick woman, appealed to Rushton to see what it was all about.

Rushton in his annoyance and excitement had for the moment forgotten to tip his band of scouts, whose numbers had increased to such an extent as he once more confronted them, that for the first time during the past two hours he smiled.

Allowing the woman to make her escape into the room, he was just in time to see the liveliest of fights. It appeared that the respective leaders of these bands were fighting to see who was to receive the remuneration that Rushton would undoubtedly give for being shown the place where Ruth was visiting.

These boys fought with the courage of game birds, —cheered on by their respective clans with such words as, "Use your left, Tim—Swing your right, Mike,"—until down they went with a thud on the hard floor just as Rushton forced his way through the crowd and separated them.

Finding out the cause of the fight, he was about to fee both of the leaders, when the party that championed Tim, as the one that showed the gentleman where the lady was, thinking that the other leader, Mike, was going to receive all the money, roared with a chorus of innumerable voices that "It was Tim, Mister, that showed you." Mike's party being mollified, Rushton advanced to the other leader, Tim, with the money. This ended the battle; the two leaders followed by their respective clans making all haste down the stairs, where no doubt a council meeting would be held to see what molasses candy store gave the most for the money.

Rushton had found that the best card he could play was the charity one; and in a short time this fastidious *fashion plate* might be seen holding conversation and



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making inquiries of the poorest and most sickly in these densely populated neighborhoods.

The neighborhood at the corner of Oak and Watson streets where the mission was situated, was noted in Birkenhead for its poverty and the drunken riotous conduct of the inhabitants of the rookeries called houses. Here women and children, barefoot and hatless, might be seen in the coldest days of winter, and in some cases with not enough clothing to hide their nakedness. Peddlers fought shy of this Oak street. The few who had had the temerity to go through it selling their wares had no difficulty in unloading their stock, but when they emerged from the street into a more respectable thoroughfare, found to their sorrow that they had little or no money, for the army of half grown boys and girls had simply mobbed them and stolen their goods.

To see Rushton in this neighborhood bore out the ancient proverb: "Love conquers all things."



CHAPTER LXVII.

THE inhabitants of Oxton had already begun to gossip about Ruth; and those designing mammas who had been trying ever so hard to marry one of their daughters to Rushton, called her anything but Sunday school names.

"She has soon forgotten her soldier lover," they said.

"Just imagine," said Mrs. Ferncliffe, "her trying to make out she is religious. The whole family are nothing more or less than a pack of swindlers, and Robinson ought to be in prison. Rushton had better look out, for with all his wealth Robinson is liable to get him into some mining or stock jobbing scheme and ruin him; and when I see Rushton I'll give him my opinion of the whole family. Both Ruth and her mother ought to be ashamed to show themselves on the street after the way Robinson robbed the public in that mining swindle, and I don't see how he escaped being sent to jail. Look at the unfortunate Dempsey—Robinson ruined him. They're schemers, the whole pack; and depend upon it, their taking a small house and appearing so poor is nothing more or less than a ruse to throw off their creditors. I firmly believe that at soon as they think it safe they will once more make a splurge, as you can depend upon it that Robinson has salted away a nice snug sum. He has gone through bankruptcy; and when he thinks he has played the martyr long enough, he'll once more begin to swindle the gullible.



CHAPTER LXVIII.

“**A**RE you going to marry Miss Ferncliffe?” asked Rushton, Sr.

“Whatever put that into your head, father?” inquired Rushton.

“Why, both mother and daughter are here so confoundedly often that I thought she had a mortgage on you.”

“She’s only keeping her hand in practice on me until some one else turns up.”

Rushton was a very desirable catch among a certain class of aristocrats who were not overburdened with wealth, but with all their bait they could not hook the fish. Here was a poor young girl with the stigma attached to her family on account of her father using the money of Jenkins’ niece, and the hatred that most of the society women of Oxton had for her mother, taking the prize away from them, each of whom had striven to make their daughter Mrs. Rushton. These mammas and their daughters could not see what men saw in Ruth; they picked her to tatters,—the men were blind and a pack of fools, so they said.

Rushton, among those who dared, was chaffed unmercifully about the mission work he was doing; but he gritted his teeth and remained silent.

When Ruth had repeatedly refused to go driving with Rushton, or attend parties, which, unknown to her, had been gotten up for her special benefit, her mother, who was beginning to lose her patience, took her to account for throwing away the chance of a lifetime, as she called it.

"Do you know, Ruth, that you are acting more like a fool than a sensible girl? I had little to say when you were engaged to the Captain; but now that he is dead, and you have not a penny in the world, with no prospects in view, and cannot expect any assistance from either your father or mother, who are almost in a state of absolute poverty, you will insist on treating a rich young man like Mr. Rushton as if you were an heiress. Have you ever thought, Ruth, what would become of you if your father died? You have not a friend that you could go to except your uncle, and you know he has not a penny in the world besides his salary. What would become of me? Would you see me go out to work for a living?"

"Mother," said Ruth, "I would like to express myself once again in this matter, and hope that you will never again become angry with me in reference to Mr. Rushton. As I have told you, I respect him very much; but when you admonish me for not going to all the parties that he and his folks are forever asking me to attend, you must bear in mind, mother, I am not engaged to him; if I were it would be entirely different; but we are only friends and can never be any nearer."

"Am I to understand, Ruth, that you positively have never thought of marrying Mr. Rushton?"

"Yes, I have not the remotest idea of ever doing such a thing."

"Are you going to remain single all your life?"

"Of that, mother, at present I cannot tell. One thing I must know, and that is, the man to whom I have promised my hand and heart must be dead beyond the shadow of a doubt before I would allow even



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a thought of another taking his place; and if proof of his death such as I should require was brought to me, even then, I don't believe, his memory being so strongly imprinted upon my heart, it would ever allow me to love another."

"Ruth, this is nonsense pure and simple. If you will come with me to your uncle, I will insist that he show you the very tunic Captain Hardesty wore when the fatal Boer bullet pierced his heart. This ought to clear up the mystery, as you seem to think it, of the Captain's death; but which to all others except you is no mystery whatever."

As Ruth, the morning after the above conversation with her mother, was about to call at the parsonage to compare notes with her uncle, and talk over any special cases of distress that ought to have immediate attention among the poor of the parish, her mother called to her to wait a moment and she would accompany her to the parsonage.



CHAPTER LXIX.

THE Reverend Charles Anderson was sitting in his study, the front room of his residence. On his desk lay manuscripts, letters, and circulars from all parts of England, including not a few notes written with grimy and calloused hands which had been left at the parsonage by the children of the poor during the absence of the Doctor, imploring him to visit their homes, as they were, in most cases, in dire need of his assistance for both body and soul.

Early or late, in a howling rain-storm, or ankle deep in mud, the moment this good man was called on, he would put on his great-coat and make his way to the house of the poor person who had sent for him. If he was at home when one of the little urchins called, with a gentle pat on the head he would say as he gave the child some fruit or anything that he had in the line of dessert :

“Wait, my little man, and we’ll go together.” The people, knowing this Christ-like man, were overjoyed the moment he crossed their threshold. With kind and cheering words he would find out the needs of the people, and if it was a case where medical advice was needed, he himself would either call at the physician’s residence, or leave an order stating to send the bill to the parsonage. He was a minister who followed the teachings of Christ as nearly as mortal man possibly could. He made no show of his charity or good deeds; and the vicissitudes of life that he saw, as he made his daily rounds, gave him, when evening came

and he sat in his study, plenty of food for reflection. To-day he would christen a baby; perhaps to-morrow officiate at a wedding; and the following day, when all that was mortal is lying cold and stiff in death, would cheer by his solemn and kind words those who had suffered the loss.

As the Doctor raised his head from his desk this morning, he glanced out of the window and was a little surprised to see his sister with Ruth as they entered the pathway to the parsonage.

"Good morning, sister," said he, as he shook hands with her and Ruth and led them to his study.

Mrs. Robinson, who was in one of her little tantrums this morning, did not respond to the salutation of the Doctor. The Doctor being one of the family, like not a few of us, when no company was present, was at times treated very rudely. He felt the slight, but passed it by apparently unnoticed.

"Charles, I've called this morning once for all to know how it is that you will not remove from Ruth's mind the silly idea that there is any possibility of that soldier-lover of hers being alive, when we all know he is dead beyond the shadow of a doubt. Do you think it right to keep back from her the proof you have of his death? Why don't you show her the Captain's tunic? Also the portrait of yourself and her that the Captain had in his breast-pocket when he was shot down? Why don't you answer, Charles? Am I not speaking the truth?"

"Alas, 'tis only too true. Would to God it were otherwise."

"Do you wish to see the proof of his death, Ruth?" queried her mother.

"No," with a slight shudder. "No evidence you can bring will convince me he is dead. When I feel that he is, I'll let you know, and I know I will as soon as his spirit leaves the body."

"If he is not dead, how came your uncle with his tunic and his private papers?"

"There have been prisoners of war stripped of their clothes, and stranger things have happened than that he should be alive and return to England in a short time; either sleeping or awake, something that I can't explain tells me that he lives, and will return."

"Ruth, either your mind is affected or it is downright stubbornness and you won't believe."

"I think, sister," said the Doctor, "that if you will leave it to me I shall be able to show Ruth that the dear Captain is dead."

Mrs. Robinson glared at the Doctor in a sardonic manner, for she believed that her brother was championing Ruth to fight against her in the battle she was waging to marry her daughter to Rushton. She knew that the Doctor was aware of the many illicit relations that Rushton had had with different women, and that his wealth had been the means of keeping him out of the divorce court as co-respondent on more than one occasion. Such things were glossed over as sowing his wild oats; but the Doctor reasoned that such sowing of seed brought forth bad fruit, and no matter how they glossed it over by means of their wealth, he did not wish to see Ruth married to Rushton; nor would he tell Ruth one word about what he knew of Rushton's career, as he was sure she would never marry him, and he did not wish to pollute her mind with scandal. Mrs. Robinson also knew that her brother

would do all that he could, but in an open manner, to prevent Ruth from ever becoming Mrs. Rushton.

That night Mrs. Robinson and Rushton held one of their usual tete-a-tetes in the little parlor of the Robinsons. There was no shyness or backwardness with Rushton at these meetings. He was bold and defiant. They were fellow-conspirators; Mrs. Robinson playing her cards to win at all hazards this rich man as a husband for her daughter. The end, in Mrs. Robinson's opinion, justified the means. No man was ever handled with such consummate skill. He was given to understand time and again that Ruth's waywardness, as Mrs. Robinson chose to call it, was only her pretense of gaining time to mourn the loss of her dead lover. Rushton knew that while the Captain lived he had no chance whatever of marrying Ruth; but his vanity had been kept up to concert pitch by many sweet, kind and considerate remarks that Ruth had made about him—so he was given to understand by her mother—but of which Ruth was entirely innocent.

The humdrum life that Mrs. Robinson was leading was galling to a woman of her disposition. Something must be done at once to remove forever the idea Ruth possessed that the Captain was alive. It was very evident that something out of the common would be needed to convince her of his death. There was also something else worrying Mrs. Robinson. While she had faith enough in Ruth not marrying anybody, at the present time, with the possibility, as she thought, of Rushton, she was not sure but that Rushton, with all his wealth, now that he had regained his usual good spirits, would get tired of this nonsense of Ruth's

and meeting some one that took his fancy, marry her. No matter what his morals were, he was rich and influential; and there were ever so many designing mammas who had their hooks well baited to attract this fine fish which they and their daughters had been angling for during the past three or four seasons. Should he become entangled in any of their nets, what would become of her? Ruth was not the girl to put herself forward and make the most of her good qualities and fine appearance. The man would have to meet her more than half way; besides, she was not the girl to attract the young fry; they did not, or could not, understand her. Something must be done at once.

One afternoon, as Mrs. Robinson was sitting in the parlor, as usual, plotting how she could bring about the wedding between her daughter and Rushton, her husband entered.

"Why, James, what's brought you home so early? Has anything unusual happened?"

"Nothing serious, my dear, only that I've got two tickets for the theatre, and thought that I would come home early so as to give you plenty of time to prepare."

"I declare, James, you are getting quite gallant in your old age."

Robinson had been given the tickets by an old friend, and as he thought it might be the means of sweetening his wife's disposition, if for a short time only, that in itself would be worth the time and what little expense it would cost to take her.

Part of the program consisted of an exhibition of living pictures, which were very realistic.

One of the scenes portrayed some very prominent people in public life, who were easily recognizable, and



which made such an impression on Mrs. Robinson that her husband asked her the cause of her silence. It was very evident that something unusual was occupying her mind. "The very thing," she murmured; "yes, that would remove the illusion, as it would be brought home to her in the manner she expected. If she still adheres to the illusion that he's not dead, then we'll meet illusion with illusion. She says that the great love that exists between her and the Captain is such that when his spirit leaves the body she will be acquainted with the fact. The man is dead without a doubt, and my daughter must not stand in my path of once more getting out of this drudgery. I will have the spirit appear to her in the dead of night; and if she ever saw her lover in her life, she'll see him then, and she'll see them bury him."

Mrs. Robinson was a woman of great ingenuity, and when she saw the living pictures and they appeared so real, the thought at once struck her that if such vivid and lifelike pictures as those she saw could be produced where you could discern the countenance and pick out individual faces, why could they not get up a burial scene representing the Boer War, and when making their films have a man made up to resemble the Captain, then have the pictures appear in the dead of night on the wall in Ruth's room?

Opposite Ruth's bedroom, at the back of the house, was a small stable and loft. If Mrs. Robinson could hire these men to make new films and portray the scenes as she had heard them described by Major Strong, then from the stable loft flash them in the dead of night on the wall in Ruth's room, she was sure

Rushton would go into the scheme and furnish the money required.

When the Robinsons arrived from the theatre, Mrs. Robinson excused herself to her husband, telling him there was part of a cold chicken in the larder, and for him to go into the cellar and get a bottle of wine; she would not take anything on account of a slight headache.

Robinson had noticed how angelic his wife had become on their way home, and attributed it to his kindness in taking her to the theatre.

Having procured the cold bottle and the remainder of the chicken, he sat down to his supper and imbibed freely of the wine Rushton had sent for the late dinner. Topping it off with an extra bumper or two, he commenced to think over the advantage of having a rich son-in-law.

"Damn it, I hope she'll marry him. To say the least, it would be the means of pulling me out of this hole that I appear to have got stuck in, and if she does,—by gad,—Robinson, old boy, with the practice you'll get from the brewery you'll be able to hold your own with the best of them."

As the contents of the bottle decreased, his imagination of the good time he would have if Ruth married young Rushton increased. By the time he had finished the bottle Ruth and Rushton were married, and he, as the proud father of the millionaire's wife, was cutting a wide swath with the rest of the "old boys" at the different clubs.

While Robinson was thinking of the good things that were to come when Rushton married his daughter, his wife was lying awake planning a subtle and



diabolical scheme, which might be the means of her daughter losing her reason, with a possibility of the shock killing her.

It was the living pictures which she was planning to have displayed to the view of Ruth in the dead of night. As morning dawned—for she had slept none during the night—she had worked out the whole scheme to her entire satisfaction.

“The thing is now to know whether these men will undertake work of this kind. I’ll write to them at once and find out; but first I’ll try her once more, and if she still insists he’s alive unless informed of his death through some mysterious source, I’ll see to it that she is so informed.”

The next day Mrs. Robinson called Ruth into the parlor. She talked on various subjects for some time, and after beating about the bush, asked her if she had heard any news about the Captain.

“No, mamma; none at all.”

“Ruth, I’m going to ask you a question which I hope you will answer with the utmost candor. Suppose you were sure he was dead, would you marry Mr. Rushton?”

If it had not been for the continual bickerings they had had on the subject, Ruth would have answered her mother without any hesitation; but she was heart-sick of hearing the name of Mr. Rushton mentioned. Knowing that her mother was determined on this marriage, and wishing to avoid a renewal of the scene that usually ensued when cornered on the subject, she paused a moment before replying.

Mrs. Robinson watched her keenly. She had in a manner, by her indomitable will power, brought her daughter to bay. She was relentless and determined to

force an answer from her if such a thing were possible.

Mrs. Robinson, like hundreds of other mothers, had forgotten she was ever a girl. Possibly the most selfish thing in the world is a mother who, having married the man of her choice and passed through that delightful period which only comes once in a lifetime, denies to her own child the same sweet Elysium.

Look at the girls who sell themselves for money. Look at their faces as they pass you in their carriages. Have they the radiance beaming in the face of the young mother who has married her heart's ideal? No; they sour and wither away. The gold they have sold themselves for has turned to dross; their offspring show in their temperament the evil of such ill-mated parentage.

Ruth, having taken time to answer her mother, said:

"While it grieves me to think of the Captain being dead, I cannot, while talking of him, answer in the same breath a question of marrying another man. You bring, mother, life and death so close together at a most inopportune time. What—think you—while I am trying with all the strength I possess, and as you say, 'hoping against hope' that the one man in all the world whom I love is living, and while my heart is sad and troubled at even the remotest idea of him being dead, you thrust on me another to take the place of him—my love—my life. Mother," she continued, "do you think I am devoid of feeling? I know how persistent you are; also that I shall be given no rest until I answer your question; but at the present time such a question is abhorrent to me, nor do I think you *are doing* right in annoying me by asking such a ques-

tion at a time like the present. You talk so lightly at times of marriage that I am shocked at you. I met my affinity in Captain Hardesty, and I don't think it possible that I shall meet a kindred spirit twice in a lifetime. At present, since you persist in having an answer as to whether I shall marry any one, let it be emphatically, 'No.' "

"You talk, Ruth, as if you were living in a world with spirits hovering around you. I want you to come down out of the clouds and face the stern reality of the world we live in. You've got to have dresses and various other things to make a presentable appearance; and when the wardrobe you have now is worn out, unless you marry some one you'll have to do as some of the women you meet at the mission house do—stay indoors. I tell you, Ruth, if you let this man Rushton slip through your fingers you'll rue it the longest day you live. Nature has been kind to you in many ways; but with your ideas and your charitable work the ordinary young man looks on you as a crank. You had better cast aside all such nonsense and marry Rushton before the prize is taken away from you. I wonder some young lady hasn't taken his fancy ere this; he certainly has been the most devoted and constant young man I ever met.

"Ruth," she continued, "I want you to answer my question. Would you marry Mr. Rushton if you were satisfied the Captain was dead?"

"No—"

"You will see us all go to the poorhouse then? You say you have nothing to find fault within Mr. Rushton; all I ask of you, Ruth, is that when you're satisfied, either through the spirit or any other psycho-

logical phenomenon, that the Captain is dead, you will then promise me to consider Mr. Rushton's offer of marriage."

"Mother, there is no room in my heart for another ; but I have suffered so much at your solicitations on behalf of Mr. Rushton, that should such a time come to pass as you describe, I will then talk the matter over with you and father. I would never have made you this promise, mother, only for the past year I have actually been afraid, and trembled each time you spoke, as I dreaded you continually asking me the same question."



CHAPTER LXX.

HUSHTON listened with rapt attention. The plot seemed to strike him as the very thing. His patience had long since been exhausted; and to think that he, Rushton, should be set at defiance by this girl, had wounded his vanity. He had on more than one occasion been on the point of "throwing up the sponge," as he called it; but on second thoughts his bulldog obstinacy would assert itself; then he would grit his teeth and swear that he'd be damned if he'd give her up. No, by gad, he'd have her yet.

"If the program goes through according to the way you have described it to me, Mrs. Robinson, she will see the most practical kind of spirits she ever saw in her life. You've a great brain, Mrs. Robinson. By Jove, you ought to have been an actress!" exclaimed Rushton, as with a loud guffaw he bade Mrs. Robinson good-night.

Rushton replenished Mrs. Robinson's bank account and told her to go ahead with all speed and hire the men to exhibit the pictures. The shock that Ruth would undoubtedly receive on awakening at the solemn hour of midnight and beholding this apparition on the wall facing her bed, had not struck Mrs. Robinson with the same force as it did Rushton. Ruth's mother had been plotting gradually for the past year; and now the greater crime did not strike her with the same force as it did her co-partner.

Rushton was so devilish that this plot of Mrs. Robinson's just suited him. At times he did not know



which was the greater, his love or his hate for Ruth. When she had, as he thought, treated him with cold indifference, in his jealous passion at such times he could have killed her. Now these pictures, he thought, would be the means of achieving one of two things: either Ruth would realize through this mysterious spiritualism of Mrs. Robinson's that the Captain was dead, and his death having been brought home to her in the manner in which she expected, it would remove all barriers from his path; or if, on the other hand, the shock should have a fatal result, which he thought was not improbable—well—he had had no hand in it; it was all her mother's doing—and damn it, why wasn't she sensible enough to marry him without all this fuss?

Mrs. Robinson, having brought home with her the program from the theatre, with the names of the men that exhibited the living pictures, wrote, asking them to call on her.

The following morning two business-like men were ushered into the little parlor of the Robinson's.

After the usual formalities, the elder of the men, who appeared to have charge of the business, told her they would finish their engagement at the theatre on the coming Saturday, and after that they would be at liberty to take any engagements that would pay them.

Mrs. Robinson explained to them what she wanted; then went over the love affair of Ruth and the Captain.

"What do you think of the undertaking, gentlemen?"

"Madame, I believe I grasp the situation, and with the description you have given me and the photograph of the Captain, which I believe you said you have in *your possession*, and a few incidental particulars which



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I will write down while here, I believe I can, as far the films are concerned, turn out a good job. There's an important question, however, that's got to be considered—where are we to operate the machine? You understand, Madame, when in operation it makes considerable noise."

"I've thought of that, gentlemen," replied Mrs. Robinson. "Right opposite my daughter's bedroom is a small stable which has a loft overhead; the distance is about what you said you required—seventy-five feet.

"One thing I want you to understand; that while this may appear an odd way for a mother to act, it is wholly on account of the great love I have for my daughter. I'm afraid that if she still continues to grieve on account of this man it won't be long before she's in an asylum, and I would sooner see her dead a thousand times than an inmate of such a place. She still insists that this man is alive; and if through your skill I can convince her of his death, then my mission is fulfilled, and you, gentlemen, will have conferred a boon on a mother whose love for her daughter is worrying her into the grave."

Promising to notify her as soon as they were ready, the men left Mrs. Robinson, for the present at least, in a happy frame of mind.

"Well," said she, "this is my trump card. How will the fates decide? I couldn't stand the suspense any longer; something had to be done."



CHAPTER LXXI. .

SINCE Rushton has joined Ruth in the missionary work, a free dispensary has been opened at each of the missions. Mrs. Robinson, for sweet charity's sake, has made the rounds of the young doctors, and with the understanding that Rushton would furnish the necessary expense, they volunteered to give their services gratis.

Now that Rushton and Ruth were working hand in hand in the charitable work, it gave Rushton the opportunity of calling at all hours at the Robinson residence. Then again, when in the mood he would write to her, making a suggestion that he thought would be of some assistance to her in furthering the good work.

One afternoon, having been fortunate in meeting Ruth at the mission house, he walked home with her; and as he was leaving the Robinson residence, Mrs. Robinson placed in his hand a note which asked him to call the following evening, when Ruth would be at the parsonage.

When Rushton called in response to Mrs. Robinson's note, she informed him that at last she had Ruth's word that as soon as she was satisfied that the Captain was dead, if then he would honor her with an offer of marriage, she would accept him.

"When are those fellows you have hired going to have the spook pictures ready? This is the most long-winded affair I ever had on my hands, Mrs. Robinson, and as I have repeatedly told you, I am getting soundly tired of the whole business."



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"They promised to notify me as soon as they were ready, and I expect them any day, as it is now three weeks since they were here."

Two days after the above conversation, the men whom Mrs. Robinson had hired called at her residence and informed her that everything was ready to make a trial of the pictures. They showed her photographs as they would appear; also one they had re-taken of the Captain's face, which had been re-photographed and joined to the body of another man. Then another, touched up by an artist, and re-photographed in a shroud, with a supplicating smile on the face, pointing heavenwards.

Mrs. Robinson gave the men the keys of the stable, and told them if any one should ask what they were doing, to say they had rented the stable. The men, promising to give a trial exhibit the following day, departed.

The next day two men were seen walking along with the driver of a dray that stopped at the alley adjoining the Robinson's stable. These men, with the assistance of the driver, conveyed to the loft over the stable, a picture machine, a large lantern, and two well-filled cylinders with gas for the calcium lights; also a box containing films and slides for the lantern.

When the driver had left, the men proceeded to unpack their apparatus. After they had been working some time, the elder of the two, addressing his companion, said:

"I'll go and see the lady, and tell her we'll be ready to make a trial by noon, and inquire if the coast is clear for us to go ahead. This seems to be rather a ticklish job; but money talks, and a man has to smother

his conscience at such times. I wish I'd been born without one; it's knocked me out of a few pounds many a time, but it's fast losing its grip on me, and after one or two more jobs of this sort I think I'll be in a fair way to dispense with it entirely."

Ringling the front doorbell, and giving the servant who answered it his card, the man waited for an answer. She returned in a minute and asked him if he would please step into the parlor.

"Good-morning, sir! I hope I have not kept you waiting."

"Not at all, madam. I've come to tell you we're ready, and if the coast is clear we'll run the program through; you can then see how you like it."

"Commence at once, please; my daughter will be away all day."



CHAPTER LXXII.

THE first of the pictures represented a battle scene. As the combatants engage in fierce strife, a detachment of soldiers suddenly appears, led by Captain Hardesty. (In making the films the men had taken great pains to give a full view of the Captain's face.) As this detachment charged with a fierce rush into the thick of the fray, a Boer soldier takes deliberate aim at the Captain, who is seen to fall headlong to the ground.

At this time the Boers are reinforced and the British driven off the field. As the Boers follow the retreating British, the Boer ambulances make their appearance.

As the pictures proceed a party of Boers appear bearing pickaxes and spades and commence digging trenches for the dead. The men so engaged here come across the dead body of the Captain. One of the Boers stoops and commences to unbutton his tunic. When he has done so he beckons to another to come to his aid, and together they take the tunic off, here giving a good view of his face. The man, throwing away the old coat he wore, put on the tunic of the Captain, and with the assistance of another of the burial party they place the body in one of the trenches. The pictures at this point are shut off.

When the disk shut off the flashlight on the picture machine, Mrs. Robinson thought the exhibition was over, and turning, began to converse with the man. As she did so his partner in the stable loft flashed the

picture of the dead Captain, dressed in a white shroud, pointing heavenwards.

"Look! What do you think of that?"

"Oh! Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Robinson, and for the first time in many moons this hardened woman received a shock. She had forgotten all about this extra picture that the man had told her he had taken, and for a moment—moment only, she thought that the Captain's true spirit had appeared to rebel against such dastardly work.

"Well, madam, how do you like our work?" inquired the man.

"It certainly is realistic; and when you flashed the Captain's picture I thought he had really appeared himself, it was so life-like."

After the men had left the house, Mrs. Robinson began to moralize on the future state after death.

"According to some beliefs, the Captain may be watching all these preparations," she said to herself. "They talk of spiritualism, and a future state in heaven; I'll take my chances. They know nothing about it; it's all guess work on their part; and my guess is that when we are dead that's the last of us. They've nothing upon which to base their slightest opinion; it's all a grand, sublime possibility, and it's been going on for thousands of years, and no one is a whit the wiser to-day. Well, I'm in for it now, and am going to see it through, come what may."

All arrangements having been made with the men, it was decided between them and Mrs. Robinson that the signal to commence the exhibit was to be the lowering of the gas in Mrs. Robinson's room. What had bothered Mrs. Robinson all day was how she was going to



awaken Ruth at the moment the pictures were flashed on the wall. She finally decided on the following plan: The carpenters had been doing a little repair work at the Robinson residence, and had left a broken sash weight in one of the rooms. This weight Mrs. Robinson procured, and placing it in the angle of the room next the door where some drapery of Ruth's screened it from view, she attached a fine string with a large loop in it, which, by a sudden jerk, would cause the weight to fall, at the same time releasing the cord, which she would take with her into the room.

The falling of the sash weight in the dead of night, rudely awakening her daughter and bringing before her eyes an apparition of such hellish work, formed and concocted by the devil in the guise of woman, was, as Mrs. Robinson hoped, to portray to the mind of Ruth a visitation from God; she knowing the effect anything pertaining to the divine and mysterious working of the Lord would have on her daughter. This woman had allowed the demon god, vanity, to gain such a mastery over her that she was risking the sacrifice of her daughter's reason, perhaps her life, for a single chance of rising to the social position she once had held. Yes, Vanity, the bubble fame, forever insatiate, had driven Mrs. Robinson to such a state that she was devoid of all semblance of true womanhood, and at the present time stood in the guise of some inhuman monster in her conduct towards her daughter.

Mrs. Robinson was nervously waiting for midnight to approach. Everything was ready; the lace curtains on Ruth's window, under the pretext that they were being renovated, had been taken down, leaving nothing



to hinder the full play of the kinetoscope on the white wall of Ruth's bedroom.

Who but God can read this wicked woman's thoughts as she sits there in her room waiting for the dread hour, which may be—who knows?—the last day of reason her daughter will ever know?



CHAPTER LXXIII.

WELL, I've tackled quite a number of funny jobs in my time, but this beats them all. I wish it was over; it's enough to give a fellow the shivers to be stuck here at midnight. It puts me in mind of the fellow trying to shoot the moon."


"It's a strange piece of business all around," said his companion. "I say, Dick, if we are pinched and brought in as accessories to some fraudulent affair that this old dame is working, we'd get all the free advertising for our pictures we wanted. It would knock into a cocked hat the actresses losing their diamonds."

"Putting all jokes aside, Harry, my boy,—that woman has got the very devil in her; she could give half the men cards, and beat them in a hand gallop."

The depressing influence of the midnight hour was having its effect on the men; and as some rats scurried across the floor, being frightened at having their quarters invaded, it added to their discomfort.

Not for weeks had there been such a night as the one chosen to begin their program; neither moon nor stars shone, the clouds hanging dark and low, reeking with moisture. It seemed as if the heavens, while frowning on such diabolical work, had in a measure helped all connected with the devilish proceedings. The darker the night, the better the effect of the pictures.

Ruth had retired, and, according to her custom, slept in a dark room with door slightly ajar. Should any of us awake in the middle of the night, hear a noise and not know the cause, or see a light, however dim,



shining into our room, for the moment, no matter how brave we might be, it would alarm us. Immediately visions of burglars and other fears would feed our imagination. What would this young girl's feelings be, when awakened at such an hour; and before reason had asserted itself from such an abrupt awakening, to be brought face to face with her lover—then witness his death—the result of such a shock—who can tell?

All is silent. Mrs. Robinson looks at the little time-piece on the mantel, the hour denoting midnight. Taking off her slippers she noiselessly approached Ruth's door, and seeing that the string attached to the weight had not been disturbed, she cautiously came back to her room and turned out the light. As she did so a silvery streak of light shot through the inky darkness, penetrating the foul atmosphere until its radiation was centered and reflected on the wall in Ruth's bedroom. With a soft, velvety, cat-like tread, Mrs. Robinson once more approached Ruth's door. Listening for a second—all silent—she pulled the cord—the sharp jerk bringing the weight to the floor with a bang, at the same time releasing the cord, which she took with her as she retraced her steps into the room.

A startled "Oh!" followed by a half frightened cry of "Mother!"—then all is silent. Mrs. Robinson once more stealthily approaches the door, which, as stated, was Ruth's custom to leave slightly ajar—she could see Ruth without being seen. With a face distorted, showing as it did the lines of avarice as to completely obliterate all traces of any tenderness—this inhuman mother gazed on her daughter as she watched the effect of her diabolical work.



The contrast of the faces of mother and daughter was great in the extreme. The shock that Ruth received at being so rudely brought into the presence (as it were) of her lover in the dead hour of midnight, caused her face at first to assume a frightened look; but as she gazed on the picture her clear conscience asserted itself, which could be noticed as the radiation of her features changed from the half frightened into the divine state of calm submissiveness. This pure girl, during the trying ordeal was, as it were, in the presence of her Maker—all fear having left her.

Sitting erect in her bed, her arms pressed heavily on each side of her body, as if to help support her during the great tension she was undergoing—this position she had taken as she uttered the cry of “mother,” for her right foot barely touched the floor, as if about to run to her mother’s room when she was riveted to the spot by the apparition on the wall.

As the light disappeared Mrs. Robinson dashed into her daughter’s room calling, “Ruth, dear, what’s the matter? Didn’t you call me?” But no answer came.

As the flash from the calcium light was shut off, leaving the room in inky darkness, Ruth fell back in a half comatose condition, and on coming to, found herself in her mother’s arms, with both gas jets lighted. Looking around with a vacant stare, she clung to her mother, saying:

“Don’t leave me, mamma,” then laid back on the pillow, as her mother bathed her temples with water. While her mother plied her with all kinds of questions, Ruth simply stared, never answering or making the faintest reply.

"What does all this mean, Ruth, have you been dreaming?"

"Mamma, I don't know what has happened, or how I feel, or if I am still dreaming or awake. Oh—it was shocking, shocking, shocking!"

"Come, Ruth, dear, tell me all about it."

"To-night—mamma—no, no, no. Let me have daylight, that I may have courage; for I have seen enough to-night that no matter how long I live, I shall never forget."

"Ruth, you must have had the nightmare. Come, child, go to sleep; you'll be all right in the morning."

"Mamma, what I have passed through this night is such that I would not dare to close my eyes again. No, mamma, I'll sleep no more to night," and arising from her bed she commenced to pace to and fro.

"Come, Ruth, get into bed, child, and I'll stay with you until morning."

"Leave the gas lit then, mamma, as I can't trust myself in the dark after what I have passed through."

"Won't you tell me, Ruth, what you saw?"

"In the morning, mamma, I'll explain everything; to-night I am as weak and cowardly as a child."

Mrs. Robinson had chosen her time to have the exhibition of these pictures while her husband was away, he having accepted an invitation to spend a week with a true and tried friend.



CHAPTER LXVIII.

AS MOTHER and daughter lay in bed side by side, how different were their thoughts. Mrs. Robinson, by a continuity of plotting, driven on as she was by the Demon God, Vanity, for the time being was enabled to grapple with and smother the pure and holy thoughts that tried to force their ascendancy over her evil designs.

The following morning, Ruth, in describing her feelings, said :

"I have read, mother, of apparitions appearing to people in the dead of night, but was always a little skeptical; and yet this appeared so real and powerfully vivid. One thing I have always believed; that those we dearly love, if away from us at the time, notify us of their death in some mysterious manner. Whatever it was, whether a divine apparition to rebel against my unreasonableness in not believing that Captain Hardesty is dead, or whether it was some dreadful dream or nightmare—I know not—but, oh, how frightened I was when I first awoke! I must be brave; perhaps what they all say is true. Oh, God, should my reason leave me—what then? They say, though, that an apparition generally appears three times. To-night I will make sure that I am awake, as I will not sleep."

"Was it not a dream, think you, Ruth?"

"Mamma, I believe I was never more awake in my life than when the apparition appeared."

"Were you very much frightened?"

"I was awakened by a noise, or shock of some kind, and on opening my eyes, there, right in front of my bed, like the handwriting we read of occurring on the wall as described in the Bible, I saw as I have described to you the death and burial of the Captain; and no matter what you may think to the contrary, mamma, I was surely awake. I saw the brave Captain leading a charge against the enemy; and as he was urging his men on, a Boer soldier took deliberate aim at him. He put his hand to his breast as the shot struck him, and fell to the ground. Then came a burial scene with spades. One of the men, assisted by his companions, took off the dead Captain's coat, then threw him with others in a grave, and commenced throwing earth over their bodies. It was dreadful, mamma, and so real that I still believe I was awake."

"Ruth, you must promise me one thing, and that is, that you will not breathe a word of what you saw last night to any one. Mind you, Ruth, no one. While I believe every word you have told me, others would not; and if they hear of it, it would not be long before it went the rounds of Oxton that Ruth Robinson wanted to make the people believe that she saw a spectre in the dead of night; and you have no idea how such stories can hurt a girl's reputation for veracity, besides making you appear foolish and causing no end of annoyance. Then they would surely say that your mind was unbalanced."

"You can rest assured, mamma, that no living person will ever know what I saw last night; to me it is too sacred to discuss with people who can never, no, not for a moment, feel what that apparition was to me."



"Do you still think the Captain is alive, Ruth?"

"Mamma, I don't know what to think. If my mind is clear, and I think it is, I certainly believe he lives; but as you all seem to think that I am laboring under a delusion, it may be true; and if so, it has been the means of keeping me from feeling that he is dead."

"Did you not think him dead last night when his spirit appeared to you?"

"I thought nothing, mamma. I was spell-bound, like one in a trance. With the dreadful truth that I had seen depicted before my eyes, at the time of coming back to my senses, I certainly thought for the moment that he was surely dead. You possibly are right; and that God in his infinite mercy took this way of acquainting me with the Captain's death. Did he not warn Joseph in a dream? Why, in His infinite mercy has He not changed my heart? My heart tells me he lives."

"I'm glad at least, Ruth, that you realize the poor fellow is dead. You must try your best to forget him; and in a short time you will have regained your old-time spirit, and be yourself once more."



CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE men received their orders to again portray the pictures.

When Mrs. Robinson went to her room at eleven o'clock the following night, she was surprised to see Ruth's door wide open and the gas burning brightly.

"Is that you, mamma?" inquired Ruth, hearing her mother pass into her room.

"Yes, my dear; why are you not in bed?"

"I feel very nervous, mamma, over my experience last night; do come and sleep with me, won't you?"

"Why, certainly, if you wish, child."

Mrs. Robinson said this in the most natural and motherly manner, thinking that after a little reasoning she would be able to talk Ruth out of any foolish nonsense she had of sleeping alone; but her daughter was so nervous that, hard hearted as she was, she was afraid to leave her.

While Mrs. Robinson was disrobing and making preparations for bed, Ruth lay in her bed talking to her; and as her mother was about to put out the gas, Ruth asked as a special favor if she would not—just for one night—sleep with it lighted.

"You know, mother, if I should see anything again to-night I shall never get over it. I made up my mind to-day to be brave and sleep without any light, to lie awake and be sure that I was so, then if anything appeared I should know whether it was a dream or a vision that I saw last night; but the night with its darkness coming on has taken away all my courage."



"I'm with you to-night, child; besides, you know I should never sleep a wink with the gas lit. Go to sleep, child, and I'll see that no harm comes to you."

Ruth, who always wished to avoid an argument, said:

"Very well, mamma, put it out."

Mrs. Robinson had no intention of going to sleep, even if she could, as she wanted to watch the effect of the pictures on Ruth. She pretended to sleep, but knew that Ruth was awake by her constant turning in bed.

The room was perfectly dark. Not a light or reflection of any kind.

They had been in bed about an hour, and Mrs. Robinson, so Ruth thought, was sound asleep. Now that the dread hour of midnight had approached, Ruth was on the verge of distraction. All sorts of vague visions and fancies were with lightning rapidity chasing each other through her brain. She was about to waken her mother and tell her she was afraid she would have to get up and light the gas, as she could not possibly endure the strain any longer, when through the darkness came the flash of the calcium light.

"Oh! mamma! mamma! mamma!" came in short gasps from Ruth, as she clasped her mother in a convulsive manner.

Mrs. Robinson still slept on—(apparently).

"Mamma! mamma!" this time louder. But no response. Then Ruth, in a frantic manner, grasped her mother, saying:

"Look! look!"

"What is it, child?" said her mother, as she turned around just as the man put the cap on the lantern, shutting off the picture of the dead Captain, the kinet-

ascope pictures having been run through before Mrs. Robinson supposedly could be awakened.

"My child, I can't see anything; I'm sure you're having another nightmare."

"The same visions as last night, mother," said Ruth, as she begged her mother to get up and light the gas, which request her dear mother complied with.



CHAPTER LXXV.

DOCTOR RICHARDS has been calling at the Robinson residence for the past two weeks daily. The case interested him, but there was something besides mere interest and medical science—it was the magnet of love—fatherly love. He had known the patient ever since she was born; had attended her during the little ailments she had in childhood; then on through the adolescent age, and as she grew into noble womanhood was as pleased each time he met her as either of her parents. To him she was the perfection of an English girl. He had often stopped his carriage to speak a word with her in a fatherly way; and at such times had not failed to notice her refined and sympathetic manner, so gentle as to charm and soothe those conversing with her. As stated, this Doctor Richards had been visiting her for the past two weeks, and, clever physician as he was, he could not diagnose her case.

As he descended the stairs into the little parlor, Mrs. Robinson followed him.

“How do you think she is to-day, Doctor?”

“Mrs. Robinson, I think as much of Ruth as if she were my own child, and will be candid with you. Her case puzzles me. Physically she is perfect; but there is a loss of energy; and I also find great vital depression—she is simply at the present time in a state of lethargy. All ambition has left her. She must be aroused; otherwise I am afraid of what may follow.”

The plotters had accomplished their hellish work. They had at last compelled Ruth to admit that she believed her lover was dead; but what a price had this inhuman mother and her equally guilty partner paid for the admission!



CHAPTER LXXVI.

THE Reverend Doctor sat in his study in solitude. He had left Ruth's bedside to go to the parsonage for dinner, or rather to escape being invited, or we might say forced, to take dinner with his sister, as she would not brook a refusal. His dinner did not appeal to his taste. He tried to nibble at one thing, and then another; but finally pushed his chair back, having scarcely touched the food. Walking into his study he lit a cigar and puffed away in silence. He could get no comfort out of the usually seductive weed. It did not taste right; there was something wanting—he could not tell what.

As he sat there he moralized and thought. He could not read. He missed the pure, earnest face that kept him company every evening. He missed the gentle rustle and swish of her dress as she moved around. There was no mission work to talk over now.

"My God — should anything happen — no, no, I won't think of it!" And throwing away the half consumed cigar he wended his way to his sister's to once more resume his vigil by the bedside of his niece.

Judging by the number of carriages that had driven to the Robinson residence during the past week, one would think that Mrs. Robinson was once more the leader in Oxton society. As the reader is aware, the Robinsons are in very reduced circumstances. The cause of so much swell'dom driving up to their residence was the illness of Ruth. The friend of all who would allow her to be such, there being scarcely a fam-



ily in Oxton who had not at some time or other felt the influence of this pious, unassuming girl. More than one head of a family had told his wife before going to business, when he heard of Ruth's illness, to call at the Robinson residence to take some fruit and flowers, and extend to her his sympathy.

We are taught to believe that our sins will find us out, which truism we cannot deny. In a like manner we may be sure that our kindness and good work will bring its reward.

As this young girl lay in bed, how soothing and pleasant to know that in her humble and unassuming way she had been in the minds of these people who now called to extend to her that sympathy she had so freely given to others.

Ruth had long ago made her peace with her Maker, and having led the most unselfish of lives, now lay on her bed with a calmness that was serene and beautiful to behold in one of God's creatures. How different it is with most of us when sickness strikes us down, and we are brought to the verge of eternity. Knowing we have led selfish and sordid lives, what are our thoughts? Have you ever, reader, been sick, and as you lay in your bed weak and languid, thought of the many mean and selfish things you had done to those angel hands who were at the moment ministering with such gentle care to your slightest wish—then at such times have you not vowed if the Lord would only spare you and give you back your health and strength, that your life would be different in the future?—alas! how many of us keep these resolutions?

The rich brought fruit and flowers to the bedside of Ruth; but most of them failed to touch the chord



to the heart like the offerings of the poor people whom she had so often denied herself to help.

These people were too poor to buy flowers grown in hothouses; but the little tots, whom their mothers sent, appeared with their pinafores starched and ironed so as to be presentable before the kind lady whom these little ones knew and loved; they came to the bedroom of Ruth, and out of their own little hands she received the bouquet of daisies, with here and there a primrose. Ruth would ask her mother to place the child on a chair as close as possible to the bed. Then would she kiss the little tot, and as she stroked its hair, ask all about its mother. Another day, Mrs. McNamara's two boys, Pat and Dan, walked from Oak street, sent by their mother to inquire how the good lady was. Mrs. Robinson's maid tried to send them away from the door, but the boys pushed it open as she tried to close it, when Mrs. Robinson, hearing a noise came to her assistance, and was horrified at the appearance of these two children, without shoes or hats, but with the most roguish and healthy appearance imaginable, and who would not go away until they had seen Ruth, their mother having told them that they must not come back without word from the lady herself. Mrs. Robinson, knowing that it would please Ruth, went upstairs and told her. She begged her mother to allow them to come up and see her, and the boys, after being admonished by the maid to wipe their shoes on the mat (at which Mrs. Robinson smiled, they being shoeless), were admitted into the presence of Ruth. These children, with abashed, yet devil-may-care look upon their faces, pleased Ruth more than a score of fine ladies with their latest gossip and tidbits.



She asked them about their mother, and was told that she was getting better, and that the doctor whom Ruth had sent still called; and that the lady at the mission house gave Pat an order each morning to go to the grocery store to get what goods she thought were necessary for them.

As the little urchins were about to leave the room, Ruth kissed them, then called to her mother, as a result of which they were taken into the kitchen and perhaps for the first time in many moons these little rascals had enough of the good things which they dearly loved.

Having been left in the hands of the cook, the boys, with their cute, roguish airs, made an impression on this good dame, and according to instructions, she commenced to dish out what food there was cooked in the larder. Cutting a small loaf into slices, and slicing up a goodly supply of boiled ham, also some cold boiled eggs that had been left from breakfast, with several cups of coffee, the cook thought surely she had placed before these boys enough and more than they could possibly eat. Going on with her duties, in a short time she turned around to see how they were getting on with their meal. Judge of her surprise when she approached the table, and saw the boys standing like two young bears licking their chops, not a vestige of food in sight. Suppressing a smile, she said: "Did you have enough, boys?"

"He! he! he!" from both of them. The idea of her asking such a thing, to them was preposterous.

The cook at this point entered into the humor of the situation, and made up her mind that she would stuff these two young cubs until they could not crawl out of the house. Going into the pantry, she brought forth



a mutton pie, which had been baked in one of the large, old-fashioned brown dishes. There had been but a small portion of this pie taken out of the dish, and, setting it down on the table, she told them to help themselves. What they had already partaken of seemed only to have whetted their appetites, for in a few moments they went around the pie like the proverbial cooper around the cask. Breaking in the dome of the pie-crust, eschewing entirely knives or forks, they very soon had the crust stowed away; then dipping huge pieces of bread in the gravy, and with the other hand grabbing a piece of the mutton, it did not take long before what would have supplied the entire Robinson household had disappeared, and was now reposing in the same place as the ham and eggs. It was very evident that this last attack on the mutton pie had taken the keen edge off their appetites. The cook, who was not to be beaten, however, determined to clean out the pantry of all small pieces of sweetmeats which had accumulated, and accordingly brought out a large plate of assorted tarts, pies and ginger cakes, besides some apples, oranges and nuts.

Now these delicacies were things these boys never got; nor did they ever see any except in the confectioners' shops; and the nearest they ever got to them was when they would rub their noses against the plate glass windows of these shops, and wager each other how many of them they could eat. Pouncing on what the cook had put before them, down they went into the cavernous receptacle, paying no heed to the comfort of that part of the anatomy. When the sweetmeats had disappeared, the good cook threw up her hands. She

was beaten and she knew it. Giving them another cup of coffee, she told them they had better go.

Pat and Dan marched out like the two little soldiers they were, or perhaps rather the making of good soldiers. They had not proceeded many yards from the house when they fished out of their pockets a supply of lump sugar, which, when they had seen the cook's back turned, they had rammed in their pockets; and as they munched it, in their boyish way, boasted as to who had eaten the most. These boys, like a great many more in the very poor quarters of large cities, whose father drank nearly all he earned, when he worked, which was seldom, had very often to provide themselves with food or go hungry. Some days they would steal a turnip from a farmer's wagon; then again they would steal potatoes from the grocery stores, and steal enough coal and wood to roast them. This is all true in many of the great centers of England; in almost every case drink being the cause.



CHAPTER LXXVII.

RUTH was sitting in their cozy little parlor, and for the first time since her sickness was able to read and understand what she was reading. Her mind, as she lay in bed, had to a certain extent been a blank. The two months of sickness, however, had brought her relief from the constant nagging of her mother as to their poverty, and how it could all be remedied if she would marry Rushton.

She was somewhat thinner; her eyes, with their look of calm resignation, appeared even larger than usual. so drawn was her face—a face—free as it was from the faintest trace of passion or grossness of any kind, it does man good to see. Women like Ruth Robinson are forever shedding the effects of their goodness and virtue around them in many ways. Always and forever patient, the children of such women as they begin to understand and reason for themselves, are gently guided in the paths of truth and righteousness, and carry with them to the grave the teachings of their early youth.

“Mother, I am thinking of that dreadful night,” said Ruth as she laid down her book and commenced her work of knitting mufflers for the children who attended the missions. She was not strong enough to go out as yet, though Doctor Richards told her if the weather was fine he would take her for a drive in a day or two.

“Ruth, do you know that I never could believe in anything of the kind, although people have often told

me they saw apparitions. I have also read of such things occurring, and among the most learned people in England to-day there is credence given to being forewarned of any great crisis."

"It does seem so strange to me, mother, that you could not see it; it was so real and lifelike."

"It was meant for your eyes only, Ruth, dear (there was truth in this statement), and they say that no one else can see anything at such times. I've no doubt you saw all that you say you did, but to me it is a great mystery. Depend upon it, it was sent on account of your skepticism, and now that you have regained your former composed state of mind, and, like a sensible girl, acknowledge that the dear Captain is dead, you will see no more visions, child."

Rushton, now that Ruth was convalescent, was once more a constant visitor at the Robinson residence. To please Ruth, and to further his designs in gaining her hand, he took good care of the missions. Others whom we have mentioned occasionally, thought they would try once more to hook this fine fish, Rushton. Mrs. Ferncliffe had become greatly alarmed, when Ruth was taken sick, at the thought that the poor at the missions would be deserted; and had driven to the Robinson's to ask Ruth's permission to allow her and her daughters to assist Mr. Rushton until Ruth was able to attend to them. Ruth, of course, was delighted—but was Mrs. Robinson?

These two women were well matched; they were each determined to have Rushton for a son-in-law. Mrs. Ferncliffe had three daughters and decided to try the entire battery on Rushton, then with her own reserve fire, loaded as she was with plenty of ammuni-



tion, was sure he would surrender and come into the fold of the dear Ferncliffes.

Mrs. Ferncliffe had seen Rushton more than once as he walked home with Ruth from the mission house, and as all mothers think their own children so much superior to their neighbors', was sure that if her daughters had the same opportunity that Ruth had, Rushton would have been landed high and dry in half the time it took Ruth to capture him.

The first day of the Ferncliffe invasion into the neighborhoods—for here were two places they would have to visit—Tranmere Vale and Watson Street—was the Waterloo of their hopes in the matter of capturing Rushton. These places of squalor gave Mrs. Ferncliffe the horrors. She had decided on visiting the Watson street mission first, as she was aware that Rushton always called at the Tranmere Vale mission on his way home; and she wished to be there with her daughters when he arrived to talk over the mission matters she had investigated at Watson Street.

When the Ferncliffe carriage arrived at the Watson Street mission, a crowd of small boys instantly swarmed around Mrs. Ferncliffe, nearly driving the dear creature frantic. She had never seen such an army of the great unwashed in her life, and instantly thought of taking the dear girls back to the Ferncliffe residence; but the power of Rushton's money once more coming to her vision changed her mind.

The Ferncliffes were not rich people, but were in what might be called easy circumstances. They had a set way of living, outside of which they dared not go. Should she capture Rushton for one of her daughters, how different it would be with no thought as to whether

they could give an extra party, or just the stated number of functions they were in the habit of giving. She would also have one of her daughters off her hands, and would, through her daughter, see that the rich Rushton continued to entertain until all the dear girls were nicely settled.

At the mission house Mrs. Ferncliffe fumed and fanned herself, and between using her smelling salts and raising her garments off the ground and admonishing her daughters to be careful, she accomplished nothing except annoyance to the woman in charge.

The boy who had made the daily rounds with Ruth to show her the houses of the people who had left word at the mission for the good lady (Ruth) to call, was there, and calling him, the woman in charge told Mrs. Ferncliffe that if she or her daughters wished to make the rounds the boy would accompany them. This was the undoing of Mrs. Ferncliffe. All her blatant talk about how she and her daughters were just dying to assist Rushton and Ruth in the noble work of charity came to naught when the woman in charge asked if she were going to make the rounds among the poor.

She clutched her smelling salts and her skirts. She—Mrs. Ferncliffe, or her daughters, to make the rounds of these hovels! Never! Monstrous to even think of such a thing! Perhaps this work had something to do with Ruth's illness—not the least doubt of it. She would send what old clothes she and her daughters could spare; but go into these hovels and visit these people?—never!

'After gaining her breath she thought she would take the wind out of her daughters' sails, as the woman in charge of the mission had taken it out of hers.

"Now, my dears, if you are ready, we'll make the rounds of these hovels; this boy here has the addresses of the people that require aid, and we'll go and see what had better be done for them."

"Mamma, you surely don't mean it!" in a chorus from the three ministering angels of charity.

"My dear girls, get your smelling salts ready and we'll proceed."

"Mamma, I wouldn't dare go into any of these places; I should be afraid of catching a fever," said Gertrude.

"Nor I," said Maude.

"Blanche will, I'm sure," said Mrs. Ferncliffe.

"No, mamma, I don't want my complexion to be ruined by contracting some dreadful disease."

Gathering up their skirts in one hand, while in the other they each held a miniature bottle of smelling salts in a gingerly manner, they tip-toed their way to their carriage, giving the driver orders to stop at the Tranmere Vale mission as they drove homewards, reaching there just as Rushton was about to leave, he having promised Ruth the night previous he would call and see that everything was running smoothly.

They shook hands all around and talked charity until Rushton, who never stopped to consider anybody's feelings, laughed boisterously at the sympathetic manner of Mrs. Ferncliffe. He could see through the subterfuge of these ladies, and would have thought very little of telling them in his blunt manner that there was as much charity in them as there was in himself. He accepted, however, an invitation to dine with them, so that they could further discuss their plan of charity; but the following day sent a telegram from his office

in town, saying that he was sorry he could not attend the dinner.

"That settles that business! That old quacking goose and her dear goslings would drive a fellow crazy. If she wants to do the charity act, let her go ahead. I don't mind giving what money it requires until I see how I am coming out with what I have on hand," said he as he mused, tilted back full length in his office chair, feet on desk, a fancy pitcher of "Rushton's Best" by his side, which, as he took his cigar out of his mouth, he sipped with the air of a connoisseur.

It was the first and last trip of the Ferncliffes for sweet charity's sake.

After leaving Rushton they scurried home as fast as their team could trot; and on arriving at their residence there was a raid on the bath-room. Their clothes were fumigated and their precious bodies treated with all the unctions and perfumes that the Ferncliffe residence had within its walls.

Mrs. Robinson laughed heartily at the clumsy effort that Rushton made in caricaturing the four worthy aspirants for charity honors, as he told her how that old quacking goose, Mrs. Ferncliffe, had invited him to dinner, and how he had lied out of it; whereupon, Mrs. Robinson bestowed on him her most winsome smiles.

"I couldn't help it—I know it was d——d bad taste on my part—but it was so ridiculous—she knows very well that I am not in love with any of this charity business, and when she said, with all apparent sincerity, for me to come to their house to discuss the matter—it was rude, I know—but I roared like a Trojan, the tears rolling down my cheeks. I suppose they'll cut me dead now,—I won't lose any sleep over it if they do, you can rest assured on that, Madame Robinson."



CHAPTER LXXVIII.

AFTER Ruth had returned from the missions one evening, for she had now resumed her noble work, her mother asked her if she did not think it grand on the part of Mr. Rushton to keep supplying money in such a lavish manner for the missions.

Ruth told her it was, and that God would surely reward him for his generosity—repeating the words: “He who giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord.”

Mrs. Robinson, sinner and hypocrite as she was, turned her head away as her daughter repeated the words. Knowing Rushton as she did, she was thinking what he would say when she told him what Ruth had said, and could not suppress a smile which she did not wish Ruth to see.

“I’m afraid, Ruth, that he’ll come and claim your hand one of these evenings. I suppose now, dear, there’ll be no drawback to your marrying him?”

“I hope, mamma, that you’re not misleading Mr. Rushton. You must give me time to think it over. You tell me, mamma, that he has been heart-broken ever since my sickness, and that the doctors were afraid he could not recover. I’m sorry, mamma, indeed I am.”

Mrs. Robinson had pictured to her daughter that Rushton, through his love for her, had almost gone into a decline. Rushton had not seen Ruth since her sickness, but contented himself by sending flowers and calling each day when he knew the reverend gentleman would not be there.

Mrs. Robinson had made the most of all the flowers and fruit that Rushton sent, and how with tears in his eyes he came each day to ask how she was; and how the thought of her lying in bed, sick, was such that if he saw her he was afraid he would break down and make a fool of himself. This and more of a like nature was told Ruth by her mother, and as Rushton was going to call at the Robinsons' the following evening, Mrs. Robinson was at a loss to know what Ruth would think of his appearance, which, if anything, was somewhat stouter than when she last saw him. It is doubtful if Rushton ever in his life went without a meal except through temper; and now that the coast was clear and no rival to worry him, he feasted as he always did.

Mrs. Robinson with honeyed words had sung sweet music in Rushton's ears; how Ruth had said she did not think there was another gentleman in all England with so much feeling for the poor; upon hearing which, Rushton guffawed loud and long, his dear consort joining in his mirth when she saw it pleased him. Rushton was a pretty sharp fellow in the ways of the world, and while he did not believe all that Mrs. Robinson told him in reference to what Ruth was supposed to have said, still he believed part of it to be true, and when our vanity is being tickled, are we not prone to swallow more than we ordinarily would under different circumstances?

Buoyed up with false hopes, Rushton was made to believe that all he had to do was to see Ruth and ask her to name the day for the wedding.

Calling at the mission house in Tranmere Vale a little earlier than usual, he met Ruth and journeyed home



with her, and when about a hundred yards from her home, he asked her the question — that all-important question upon which so many of our hopes, and our very lives, as we supposed at the time, depended. Rushton was not at all romantic in putting the question to Ruth.

She told him that the subject was a very painful one, and that she must have time to answer it; that she was grieved he should wish her to be his wife when her heart was at all times with the one in Africa, and hoped his infatuation for her would cease when he knew she could never love him as a wife should love her husband, and that it would take another year to satisfy her beyond all doubt that the Captain was dead.

"Then if I wait for a year, will you promise to be my wife?" he asked.

Ruth, with head bowed, remained silent, unconsciously making small holes in the ground with her parasol. They had come to an abrupt stop just inside the little garden gate of Ruth's home.

Her uncle, Doctor Richards, her mother, and all her true friends had asked her to believe, as they did, that the Captain was dead; and if she had no regard for her health, whose failure they attributed to her constancy in thinking of him, would she not, for their sakes, try to forget him? Ruth in her heart never believed her lover was dead; but since the night of the exhibition of the pictures, her faith had been somewhat shaken, and at the present time her mind was not clear on the subject; everybody said he was dead; then the apparition—and what was her belief against all this evidence to the contrary? Her mother had exacted a solemn oath from her that never again would she men-

tion the Captain's name. Now, when Rushton asked her to become his wife, the very thought of such a union was as an impending doom hanging over her head. How she wished her father had not failed in business. Her mother had hounded and worried her and worked on her feelings to such an extent that in her fond, loving heart she had promised to sacrifice herself for the sake of her family by marrying him, after explaining to her mother at the time the promise was forced from her that she could never love him as a wife ought to love her husband—at which her mother shed no tears.

"You don't answer me, Ruth?" queried Rushton.

Raising her eyes, which a close observer could see were tear-stained, a half frightened expression on her countenance, her sympathetic heart aching, lest she should be the means of bringing sorrow to this man, she answered him with head slightly bowed:

"Mr. Rushton"—here the tears refused to be held back any longer; and as she raised her head the great emotion she was undergoing was pitiful to behold—"I give you my promise, unless he comes back"—at which words she had broken down completely, and with unsteady steps turned from him, entered her home, and slowly made her way to her bedroom, where, with door locked, free from all prying eyes, we leave her to the solitude of thoughts, sacred to her alone.

Standing statue-like, Rushton's eyes followed her until lost to view as she entered her home; then this worthy gentleman awoke from his apparent dream and dashed down Poplar Road with a swinging stride. Stopping at the Talbot Hotel, he took one or two drinks of whisky, lit a cigar and proceeded on his way



towards the Birkenhead Ferry, intending to pass the night at one of his haunts in Liverpool. He tried to analyze his feelings. She had certainly given him a promise; but there was a string, figuratively speaking, tied to it. Then again he would think:

"The fellow is surely dead, and d——n her, I'll have her in spite of h——." To a man of Rushton's vain disposition, the thought that Ruth still loved the Captain was such that at that moment he could have killed her, and the next moment—no—he would not die for anybody. One thing he had realized—like his accomplice—that he could not drive this meek and loving girl—she had also taught him a lesson. We have seen him plead with Ruth for a promise. He, who never kept a promise in his life if it did not suit him to do so, knew that if she gave it she would fulfill it. She had taught him that there were people in the world who could be depended upon.

While Rushton and Ruth were in the little garden, there was one gazing at them who was the means of bringing about the tableau that was then taking place. Mrs. Robinson was closely watching, from apparently closed blinds in the parlor, the prelude, as she thought, to the wedding. When she saw Ruth with her parasol all unconsciously tracing marks in the ground like Chinese characters, she exclaimed:

"Ah, he's cornered her—he's getting her to name the day—this fellow is not such a booby as I thought. He might have married her before this if he'd gone the right way about it. Men never will understand women."

Not wishing Ruth to see that she had been watching her, she stole quietly behind the door as her daughter

made her way to her room, expecting every second to see Rushton come in and tell her that it was all settled. Not hearing his footsteps, she looked again through the window and saw the redoubtable Rushton swinging down the road as if his life depended upon getting as far away from the Robinson residence as possible. What did it all mean? Ah, she knew; Rushton wanted Ruth to have a little time after making the promise before meeting him again; she was so shy, thought Mrs. Robinson, that Rushton had brains enough to see it, and would not come into the house for fear of embarrassing her.

Mrs. Robinson stealthily walked upstairs, and in an apparently careless manner looked in each room; then tried Ruth's door; but it was safely locked, and Mrs. Robinson, who was just dying to know the outcome of that all-important meeting, would have to wait. The next few hours would seem years until she saw Ruth and knew the result. There was no help for it; it was maddening; but she must wait, wait, wait—.



CHAPTER LXXIX.

AS SOON as Royal received the money from the stockbrokers in Liverpool, he proceeded to London. On arriving there he looked around for quiet quarters, which he found in Russel Square. He did not wish to go to any of the principal hotels, his desire being to keep as quiet as possible. He knew the ring at the head of the New York police department as well as they knew themselves. At the present time he was worth plucking; also, if they got their hands on him he was powerless, and had no redress, as they could at any time rake up the old indictments which had been held as a club over his head when they squeezed him dry before. If they could not extradite him for the late swindle, the powers would see that he was indicted on a charge that would allow of his coming under the extradition laws.

When the minions of the law had their clutches on him, what then would be his fate for daring to give them the double cross? With what delight they would relieve him of his ill-gotten gains; yes, they would remove at one single sweep the cause of his downfall; and for his temerity in daring to throw them down in the manner he had, he would have to swallow the most bitter pill he ever took in his life. They would squeeze him so dry that the worst shyster lawyer in New York would have nothing to do with him.

When the ward man had notified Royal that he was wanted at headquarters, he went at once and saw the chief of police. What took place there no one will

ever know ; but Royal's face as he came away wore a hardened and determined look which gradually changed to one of defiance. It rankled in his breast the way they had plucked him before. The police knew that Royal was sensible of the fact that they were all-powerful, therefore they never for a moment thought he would pull out and shake the dust of New York from his feet, and so waited patiently for him to come and settle.

The night that Royal left New York for Montreal, he had written a letter to the chief of police, and had given it to a faithful henchman of his own to deliver, with instructions to take it down to headquarters the next morning at eleven o'clock. Not a soul but the partners of Royal knew he was going away that night. Two days later the chief of police received another letter from Royal sent from Boston. This letter had been sent along with others enclosed to a man in Boston whom Royal could trust, with instructions to mail as per Royal's orders, the man filling in the dates. To the chief of police, Royal stated in his letter that he was collecting all outstanding moneys before the crash came. These letters, although not addressed personally to the chief of police, as soon as they arrived in New York, he received. There was no danger of anybody daring to open any of the chief's mail ; but in such an astute business they don't like to have an aftermath. Four or five days later another letter was mailed to the chief from Chicago, stating that Royal would be back in New York in two days. When the chief received this, Royal was landing from the steamer in England.



When the chief realized that he had been duped by Royal his rage knew no bounds. He cursed streaks so blue you could almost see the sulphurous vapor.

At the time the chief sent for Royal, he had been informed that Royal was at the head of the gigantic swindle of the Jack-Pot mine. It was then arranged that when Royal gathered in all the shekels he could, he was to be relieved of the tainted and ill-gotten gains, which, after passing through the process of purification of the police department, would be sanctified and blessed, and once more sent on rounds of usefulness. It was so arranged that after relieving him of this load of filthy lucre, when the crash came, he was to stand his ground, and they would take care of him—but—he never came back.

When the other members of the firm of Reed & Co. arrived in London, they held a quiet meeting.

Brady, Renshaw and Bowers had not waited for the police to get their hands on them; but while Royal was holding the police off with his letters, they made their way to England by different seaports, and when they all met in London each received his share of the spoils from the sale of the stock.

Royal had received a cipher dispatch from the man in the "know" in police circles in New York to the effect that at present he need not worry, but to keep shady, as they had not decided on any action at the time he sent the dispatch. He saw by the New York papers which he procured in London the great furor the collapse of the mine had caused. The English papers, with their insignificant headlines, were as nothing to the flaring ones in some of Uncle Sam's yellow sheets. But while Royal had swindled on both sides of the Atlantic—how differently they took their medi-

cine! Brother Jonathan flared up and raised the deuce for about forty-eight hours; then took off his coat and went in to make more dollars, with the resolution that the next sharper would be welcome to all he got from him. But John Bull was sore. He did not flare up; he thought, and thought on, and took his medicine in the most minute doses. He took it home with him. He nursed it. He pondered over it night and day. The trouble was, John Bull's vanity had been wounded—the d—d Yank had beaten him. He never stopped to think that Yank had beaten Yank, but nursed a wound of hate against all Yanks.

Royal and Brady have decided to leave London for the continent, leaving behind them Renshaw and Bowers, who for the present are fascinated with horse-racing at the various English race courses.

There was one thing that Royal had on his mind ever since he had commenced this gigantic swindle, and knowing his weakness for gambling, he decided now that he had the money to put it into effect.

Looking over the many sound trust companies that are to be found in London, he deposited with one of them fifty thousand dollars for his niece, Miss Bertha Travers. This young girl, for whom he had placed the money in trust, was an orphan, the child of his favorite sister. When his sister lay dying of consumption, Royal received the dispatch as he sat at the gaming table, and hastened with all speed to her bedside; and before she breathed her last, promised he would see that her child was brought up a lady. After his sister's death, he placed the child in one of the most exclusive seminaries for young ladies in Westchester, New York, supported, as she and the principal of the

school supposed, by her rich uncle, broker and speculator. This occurred five years ago, before Royal was known as the head of the firm of Reed & Co. It is needless to say that the principal of the school never suspected that the money which Royal sent regularly to support his niece was won at the gambling table. He had been known on several occasions to pawn his diamond pin to pay the quarter's allowance for the "kid," as he used to call Bertha to his chums; and on occasions when he had been lucky in gambling he always sent her some costly present, and looked on doing so as a talisman for good luck the next time he sat down to the gaming table.

When he had deposited this money, he mused:

"Now that I have kept my promise to my saintly sister, I almost feel her presence. She may, for aught I know, be near me at this moment. Ah, the awful mystery of the Great Beyond, to solve which, we must die!"

Royal and Brady have now arrived at the famous gaming resort, Monte Carlo.

This man Royal was at last in his element. The crowded Casino, the beautiful gardens; the freedom that existed there; besides rubbing elbows with the most beautiful women he had ever seen; all had a tendency to arouse the Bohemian spirit that was his by nature. Yes, this was life, he muttered to himself; this was something to live for. He was a born gambler and was now in his paradise.

While Royal and Brady were enjoying themselves in Monte Carlo, Bowers and Renshaw still remained in England helping to fill the coffers of the book-makers at the various race tracks.

Each day Royal and Brady were to be seen seated at the tables, playing with all the skill of old-time gamblers. Royal knew there was no system in the world that could beat the game, though his cool nerve and thorough knowledge of gambling helped not a little, making it almost an even thing except when he had a phenomenal run of bad luck. This day he had been seated at the table with varying success, when Dame Fortune seemed to frown on him. Try as he would, with all his skill, he could not cash a bet. The tables were crowded, though most of the onlookers had congregated to watch this man give battle to Dame Fortune. It was the man's nerve they all admired. Some of them began whispering that Monte Carlo would have another victim before the night had passed, referring to the many suicides that took place at the Casino when men had lost their last dollar. They did not know, however, the man they were watching—he still played and lost.

"I wonder how much more money the fellow will lose before he stops," some of them were saying.

Brady had stopped playing, and went to Royal's chair.

"Let it go for to-day, Royal; better luck to-morrow."

"Not on your life. Brady; I'll see it through if it takes my last dollar."

Royal here began to double his bets, and at last was rewarded with a winning. Placing all on the next hazard, he again won. The fickle goddess now began to smile on him. It seemed that he could not go wrong in placing his bets, and was now ahead of the game. As he played he increased his stakes. The people stared, admiring his coolness. Would he ever stop



playing? Now that he had this winning streak he played more coolly, if that were possible, than when losing. Most of the other gamblers, as stated, had stopped playing; and these, with the loungers around the Casino, all thronged about his chair. They wanted to see this man, whoever he was, who played with Dame Fortune in such a reckless manner.

He had already passed the highest amount that had ever been won at one sitting. Everybody was wondering who he was. It seemed as if there was an affinity of spirit with the onlookers and Royal, as each time he won there were murmurs of "Bravo! Bravo!"

During most of the time that Royal had been playing, there sat next to him a lady who had staked her last dollar and lost. Royal had noticed how recklessly she had been playing, but he knew how women gambled; also that none of them had ever made a success of it. At Sheepshead Bay, at Brighton Beach, at Saratoga, it was the same; they never could win, and never ought to play. Women in all walks of life will travel miles to save a few cents; but when they take to gambling, will play their last dollar with utter recklessness. They gamble as they love—blindly, madly.

This lady next to Royal had an anxious—nay, almost insane look as her eyes wondered first to Royal, then to the money that was almost continually being pushed by the croupier towards him. She was so worked up over her losses and the sight of Royal's winnings, that for the time being all the marks of good breeding seemed to have left her, as she sat staring rudely at him. Royal saw at a glance she was in a despondent mood, and would have liked the pleasure of staking her if he could have done so with-

out being rebuked. As he was about to stop playing, he made up his mind he would risk it. Raising his hat, he begged her pardon in a winning tone, and asked her if she would continue to play for him a little while, by doing which she would confer a great favor, and before she could reply pushed towards her quite a decent stake. He had admired the woman's nervy way of playing, and his excuse for staking her was to give her a chance to get even with the bank, so he told Brady. She answered him in broken English that she would be delighted to play for "Monsieur."

Royal and Brady made a pretense of leaving the room, but only walked to where they could watch those seated at the tables without being seen by the players. As the reader may have long since judged, wherever there was a pretty woman, if Royal could by any means get acquainted with her, he would try his best to do so. Now this woman at the tables had interested him, and he had returned to watch her play, and as the croupier pushed her second winnings towards her, he was pleased to see the rather hard lines about her mouth relax. One or two of the hardened faces around the tables looked with jealous eyes on this woman, who had taken the lucky seat of Royal's, such superstition being common with gamblers.

As this woman continued winning, the anxious look that Royal had first noticed on her face disappeared. She was now radiant with smiles, and as the croupier once more pushed her winnings to her, her face took on that expression that comes only to those who gamble, and have not had enough experience to hide their emotions. She was at this time fearful lest she should lose and very wisely decided to stop playing. She

looked around for Royal; he saw her as she did so, but she did not see him.

"Let us get out of here, Brady; I don't wish to take back that stake; let her keep it."

As Royal and Brady were leaving the grounds they saw this young lady on the arm of a rather stylish young gentleman, who appeared to be either an Italian or Frenchman.

"Who's the gentleman, Brady; husband or lover?"

"Ask me something easy, Royal; she'll be after you to-morrow to pay back your stake."

"I like nerve in anybody, Brady, and by gad, she had it; I never saw a woman in my life play as she did."

"Did nothing else take your eye, Royal?"

"Ah, pshaw, Brady; now why do you ask such a question?"

"Come, Royal, own up; you know you never would have staked her—no, not on your life, if you had not been enamored of her charms."

"What, Brady—in so short a time and without speaking to the dear lady?"

"A falling of the eyelash; a timid look! a faint blush, have before to-day, Royal, my boy, cost you a few thousand dollars, and I don't think you've changed much since we left Gotham."

CHAPTER LXXX.

THE average man starting out in life, by frugal, honest and methodical habits, in the course of his career may amass enough money to provide for himself and family the latter years of his life without resorting to active business. At such a time there is a certain contentment about a man that comes only to those who have attained this state by honest and industrious means. He looks the whole world in the face, and carries with him a contentment firmly implanted in his being, the steady growth of the reward of his industry. He has passed through privations, and now, in the sere and yellow leaf, it is ennobling to see such a man; he stands as a beacon light for the younger generation.

How different it is with Royal and the rest of the firm of Reed & Co.! Now they have their ill-gotten gains, are they contented? No. They have the finest raiment. They spend money with lavish hand. The attachés of the different hotels and restaurants they patronize fawn and dance attendance upon them, which accounts for the size of their tips. With all this fine raiment and unlimited supply of ready cash, they were not happy. They strived vainly for that peace of mind which they saw in others who had come by their means through perseverance and integrity. The money they were spending so lavishly, cursed as it was with the shadow of the hell they had caused in the numerous families who had invested in the stock, brought no peace of mind.



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At times, while under the influence of Bacchus, they imagined they were enjoying themselves; but the next morning, when the cold, impartial daylight shone forth on them, and they went out into the world, instead of looking their fellow-man in the face, they cast furtive glances around them, wearing at all times an anxious expression. They could not go into good society, as they would then have to prove their respectability. They saw people at the various fashionable resorts, seemingly without a care, who in their nonchalant way were creating a furor. They tried to ape these people, but were cut off at every entry. There is nothing truer than the Biblical saying, "Be sure your sins will find you out." Go where you will, you may hide them for a time, but in the end they will come out and shame you.

Bowers and Renshaw are still following the English race meetings, and are now with the great class of Bohemians who care not who you are or where you come from, so that you are what they call a good fellow.

Royal and Brady realized that there was no possibility of their ever getting into good society; but as American tourists they managed while on the continent to make fair headway among the better class of travelers, never staying long enough in one place to be found out in any of their little stories when cornered about themselves.

The lady whom Royal had staked at the gambling table in the Casino was one of a certain class that are to be found at all times in Monte Carlo, while her escort, the man with whom she had left the Casino, was, from a moral standpoint, a great deal worse. He

was a vulture waiting until the spoils were procured, to fly down and feed on the carrion—using this woman as a bait to fleece travelers who came to Monte Carlo. Such women act in a manner as the lion's provider; though a shame to compare such noble brutes with such ignoble creatures.

She told her companion of the fabulous sums of money that Royal must have won; and in describing him and Brady stated that she thought they were Americans by their accent.

A day or two after the events of the last chapter, while Royal and Brady were strolling through the garden of the Casino, they suddenly came face to face with two women—one being the woman whom Royal had staked at the gaming table. Disengaging herself from her companion, this woman approached Royal and Brady with that seemingly natural gush that takes a man by surprise, and in its simplicity is liable to deceive the most astute and blasé old rounder, by its apparent ring of genuineness. This woman appeared the soul of unaffectedness and candor. Her large, honest-looking eyes, with a reckless display of open-minded, unassuming frankness, made her appear a very good young woman who, in her innocence and inexperience of the world, had slightly erred in making the acquaintance of strangers. It was her boldness, combined with her apparent simplicity, that did it. She confessed with the most sublime candor that it did not appear, nor was it at all ladylike on her part to sit still, watching with eager and covetous eyes every dollar that Royal won.

"But, do you know, Monsieur, that I had lost all my money; and to be honest about it, I had played with

money that was intended for another purpose."

The pure and innocent women of the world, women who tame and lead the most rebellious of men into the paths of truth and righteousness, and who by their purity and unselfishness make us at times blush with shame at the manner with which we treat such devotion—be she mother or wife, with all the world crying "Crucify him!" will cling to you, defying all, and make a target of her body for your sake—such women Royal never had met. He had never seen into the pure world of womanhood; but like most men of his class, had a veneration for such women, and looked on them with great reverence. In their slang parlance such men will say, while speaking of some woman that has come under their notice, that she is "straight," which means that they will leave her severely alone. Not wishing to say one word in favor of Royal or any such man, it is generally conceded that few if any women are ruined by the better class of gamblers, or as they are sometimes termed, "high rollers." The women with whom they pass their time are, nine times out of ten, ruined by sneaks of the goody-goody kind; and it is only when they are cast off by such men that the gambler becomes acquainted with them.

Royal and Brady were soon in great favor with these girls, and—don't blush, gentle reader, should you be one of the gentle sex, for while flirting may be wrong, it has been indulged in, and I'm afraid always will be, by a great many very, very good girls, who have trembled when they reached home for fear their parents or guardians should know of their conduct.

When about to leave, the young ladies gave Royal and Brady an invitation to call on them.

It was his reverence for good women that threw Royal off his guard with the little French woman, and in replying to a sarcastic remark of Brady's in reference to her, said:

"Whethen she be saint or sinner, Brady, I don't know. She is either a pure, unaffected girl or an actress of no mean order—which, I shall soon find out; and if she is good, let her stay so—there are too many of the other class. Nature has been kind in endowing her with such a form and face. It is in the power of such a woman, Brady, to lead a man on to either the door of heaven or the pitfalls of hell."

The next evening found both these men in as fast a set as they had ever met in their lives. The men, who were of the Latin race, dark and swarthy, were smoking; the girls also taking an occasional puff as their respective admirers rolled the dainty and seductive cigarette for them. There seemed to be no dearth of wine, and an air of good fellowship prevailed all around. The Frenchman, who perhaps had only a few francs in the world, puffed his cigarette, and with his hands thrust in his pockets or thrown behind his back, strutted around the room with the air of a millionaire.

The introductions being over, card playing commenced.

Sauntering home in the small hours of the morning, Royal, as he stopped to light a cigar, said:

"Did you see that fellow that sat next to you stack the cards?"

"No; did he?"

"Yes—well, let them have all they can get out of us two little innocents, Brady; we have got to be bled

a little each time we go; it makes us all the more welcome."

"You have completely cut out the Spaniard and captured his girl, Royal. You had better look out that he does not get the drop on you."

"A man's a fool to fight over a woman, Brady. When she throws you down you might as well get out. If you don't and still hang around her skirts she may tolerate you for a little while to run her errands, but in the end she has nothing but contempt for you."

"You seem to have it pat, Royal."

"Oh, I don't know, Brady—we might as well admit it, and we might as well at the same time give the women a square show; what's sauce for the goose ought to be sauce for the gander. How many times during our lives—yes, both of us, Brady—have we got tired—or call it what you will—of one of the fair charmers that we have been spooning for some time—and then—in a word—wanted to get rid of her? Don't you think that they likewise get tired of us and want to be released from—well, a hundred things by which we annoy them—and perhaps at the time they were deceived in thinking that they had captured a paragon, and who in time turned out to be nothing more than a stupid jackass? Give everybody a square show, Brady; we expect it, and why not give it to the women? Mind you, Brady, I'm not alluding—God forbid—to any of our virtuous women; I've nothing but the most profound respect for them, for in my opinion only for them the world would destroy itself and be worse than anything we ever read of in history. It's divine woman, with her motherly instinct, and her infallible faith in the Supreme Being, which she im-



bues in her offspring and which is handed down from generation to generation, that keeps the majority of men in the right path."

"Royal, you ought to join the Salvation Army—the very thing. Fancy their building in Fourteenth street, placarded in large letters, 'ROYAL, THE REFORMED GAMBLER, WILL SPEAK TO-NIGHT.' All the clubmen in New York would attend."

"Go on, Brady; have a little fun, but let me tell you, my boy, that if ever there was a religious sect in this world that did good, the Salvation Army, in my opinion, is the one. If you'll stop to think, Brady, they are following right in the footsteps of the teachings of Christ, and the one grand thing above all others is, that they deride no religion, but teach for Christ's sake; and that devilish sectarian antagonism, which at times takes on such fierce strife that these Christians would, if they were not held back, fly at one another's throats—for what? Because each in his bigotry thinks he has the only way to heaven. There'll come a time some day, Brady, when there'll be no creeds with their hundred different denominations. All the sacred edifices in the Christian world will have but one or two words carved on the front of them, and these words I believe will be universal and simply read, 'THE HOUSE OF GOD.' A grand, universal creed, making everybody in the world brothers and sisters and forever wiping out the narrow-minded bigotry that exists to-day."

"Royal, you missed your calling—you ought, honestly, to have been a preacher. Let us go back to where we were. We were talking of that Spaniard, and I'm a little uneasy about him. I've got an idea that he'll make trouble for us, and warn you to be on



the lookout for him. It's plain she has gone back on him and his dander is up. That fellow would draw a knife on you as quick as a flash. Everybody is not a philosopher like yourself, and cannot swallow being cast off by a woman with such grace as you can."

"Oh, pshaw, Brady, it's all a case of grit. If you have that, you're all right, be it love or anything else. Make up your mind to be game—grit your teeth—swallow your dose—then show your nerve by keeping quiet until such time as the wound heals."

All this time Royal and Brady were painting things a bright vermilion in Monte Carlo. The way they gambled at the tables was the talk of the place, and whenever Royal sat down to play there was sure to be a crowd of people watching him. They were put down as two American millionaires, their freedom with their money bearing out the report of Dame Gossip.

The young woman, Viola, who at first had no intention of anything in common with Royal, except what money she could wheedle out of him, was fast becoming enamored of her "Monsieur Royal," who had that reckless, unassuming air that is generally so effective with women.

Viola's lover had already made threats of what he would do to both her and her American beau if she did not give him up, as it was very evident that she had thrown him over entirely for Royal, and his source of revenue in consequence had ceased. He was not quietly going to lie down and see this American have things all his own way. Royal heeded not Brady's warning, his disposition being to wait until the crisis came.

As Brady and Royal, with their lady friends, were leaving the Casino one evening, Viola's old lover, who had been keeping close watch upon her for some time, approached and asked if she would give him a moment's conversation. Neither Royal nor Brady could understand what the nature of the conversation was, as their knowledge of the French language was limited to a very small vocabulary. She appeared to them, however, to put her foot down in a very decided manner, and they construed more by gestures than words that this lover of hers was getting his walking papers. Whatever she said caused such an ebullition of temper on the part of the man that he lost control of himself to such a degree that he slapped her face with his gloves. Giving a short, sharp cry, she was about to strike him with her parasol, when Royal, who had been watching them very intently, jumped in and knocked the fellow down; then calling the first conveyance at hand, the party drove away, leaving the man's friends to assist him.

The next day Royal and Brady discussed the episode of the night before.

"Do you know what I should do if I were you, Royal?"

"No, sir; I don't."

"Well, I should just pull out of this place. That fellow you knocked down is, without a doubt, in a desperate state. He is evidently without funds; and as you have stolen the goose that was laying the golden eggs,—and by doing so taken away his means of support,—then thrashed him.—now, I feel sure he will try to get square. I know he would get the worst thrashing he ever got in his life if he fought you in a fair, manly

way, but the devil of it is, these fellows know nothing of using their fists—it will be done suddenly, and with a knife or something equally as dangerous, and you might get it strong enough, Royal, to make you cash in your last check.”

“What do you want me to do? Pack up and tell the fair Viola that I am afraid of her lover?”

“Yes, either that or go and see the fellow and have some kind of an understanding with him; no doubt he could be bought off cheaply; these fellows are full of absinthe half the time, and under the influence of that hellish compound a man is liable to do anything.”

“I think you are making a mountain out of a molehill, Brady; I don’t think the fellow will ever bother us again.”

“You’re wrong there, Royal, or I’m no judge of human nature. When they picked him up after you knocked him down he had the most intense hatred depicted on his countenance that I ever saw on the face of a human being. You can form some idea of his temper and desperate character when he so far allowed it to get the better of him as to strike Viola in our presence, when he must have known he ran at least the chance of getting a good thrashing, if nothing more.”

“Let us forget it, Brady; I guess we can take care of ourselves when the time comes.”

CHAPTER LXXXI.

PARIS, in all its glory. Gay Paris, whose people take their troubles so lightly, and their pleasures in such a joyous manner that they are almost childish in being free from past sorrows.

The season was at its height. The theatres were crowded nightly. Gay throngs were to be seen in the restaurants after the performances were over at the different places of amusement.

In the most expensive and select of these, no parties that assembled were more gay or had such elaborate suppers as Royal and his friends.

To please the gay Viola, and much to the delight of Brady, Royal had consented to leave Monte Carlo for the gay metropolis. They had rented a fashionable suite of rooms on the outskirts of the city; and their hired carriage as they drove through the parks and boulevard was not excelled by that of any of the Parisians.

Leaving a fashionable restaurant one night, or rather early in the morning, Royal and his friends arrived at their apartments, a gay and laughing party, never thinking of the morrow. They had spent the night riotously, and as the driver lashed his horses and drove rapidly away, were about to ascend the steps when Viola gave a scream, as a man with a knife or dagger made a spring at Royal, whose back at the time was partly turned to him. Brady saw the man as he made the lunge, and, not having time to draw his pistol, sprang forward and would have succeeded in his pur-

pose of catching the assassin's arm, but for the villain's companion striking him at the same instant with a club. The knife or dagger driven with great force buried itself in the breast of Brady, as Royal turned to find out the cause of Viola's screaming. It was all done in a flash; and as the man who had been Viola's lover realized he had struck the wrong man, he turned with a yell of rage and attacked Royal, who, horrified at what had occurred, fell back. The man rapidly approached—the light from a lamp shone on his face, which was, for the time being, that of a maniac.

Royal told the man to stand back if he valued his life; he paid no heed, and as his companion was also approaching, Royal, who had pulled his revolver, backed rapidly.

There was no time to lose—it was two to one, and one at least devoid of reason. The man raised his arm when within striking distance—the weapon gleaming in the lamplight—as Royal, taking deliberate aim, sent a bullet crashing through his brain, and had only time to face about as the assassin's companion advanced with the weapon that had knocked Brady senseless. It was very evident that the man was crazed with absinthe, as he paid no attention to his companion, being bent on killing Royal.

With upraised club the assassin advanced. Royal, backing rapidly, tried to talk to him, which only seemed to incense his antagonist. Not wishing to kill him, he side-stepped and dodged the many blows aimed at him, thinking that the man would become exhausted and cease his attack. As Royal was dodging one of the murderous blows, he slipped to his knees. Instantly, the man raised his weapon, bringing it down with all



the force he possessed—it missed Royal's head, striking his shoulder, and for the time being paralyzed his left arm. As the man raised his weapon again, Royal, who was now desperate, steadied himself on one knee and fired—dropping the man in his tracks.

Royal did not need the aid of a physician to tell him that his boon companion was dead. Instantly taking Brady's papers and valuables, not leaving a vestige of a clue, he hurried from the scene of the tragedy, making for the darkest thoroughfare. His nights of pistol practice in the New York tenderloin had saved his life.



CHAPTER LXXXII.

ROYAL'S first thought was of flight; but quickly recovering himself, he remembered he was not in the States. This was France, with its passports and a language which he could not speak with any degree of fluency. He walked rapidly through street after street, his brain afire. He had drunk rather more than usual that night; but the terrible ordeal he had just passed through had sobered him completely. He had no idea whatever where he was, and was afraid to ask. He must have been walking two hours when it dawned upon him that for his own safety he ought to get under cover. He knew his only chance was in keeping perfectly quiet and not attempting to leave Paris until the notoriety which the tragedy would undoubtedly assume had died down. As he emerged into a more prominent thoroughfare he met one of the many women that infest the French capital at all hours of the night. As she accosted him, he shuddered and passed on. Not to be denied, the woman followed.

"I must go somewhere and get off the streets: if I go to a hotel in my present condition and without any baggage, when the papers come out it will, to say the least, cause people at the hotel to compare notes. Why not pass the night at this woman's house? She may have a spare room."

As the woman still followed, Royal, when he got into the shadow of one of the lamps, waited until she came up to him. She appeared a dull, uninteresting person, but stylishly dressed.

"She seems so ignorant that I don't suppose she ever reads the newspapers; so much the better."



CHAPTER LXXXIII.

RIGHT in the heart of the Latin quarter of Paris may be seen a small restaurant kept by a certain Monsieur Rennells. This Monsieur Rennells, in years gone by, was known to the police of New York as Mike Reynolds. He now, for various reasons, preferred the balmy air of France and the gay manners of the Parisians who patronized his café, and who, as they drank their wine, would scold his enemies, and never tired of listening to all the delightful stories of which the Irishman had as neat a stock as any son of the Emerald Isle ever told. The raptures that the Frenchmen went into as the redoubtable Michael unloaded these stories was such, that while some had a semblance of truth when first told, Mike, to still further please, added coloring each time he told them until at last they had attained the impossible.

Some ten years past, when the gay Monsieur Rennells (Mike Reynolds), landed in Paris from New York, he did not need the income of the little restaurant he now had to support him,—no, he could count his friends by the score, and moved around in certain parts of Paris with no little gusto. As the reader may infer, there was something else besides the climate that caused the prolonged absence of the Monsieur from New York—he had left that city with other people's money, but in such a manner that he could not be extradited. When the Frenchmen knew that Michael had money, he was besieged with a thousand and one schemes to double,—nay, multiply it a thousand fold. *Like a great many, Michael had plundered others,*

only to be himself plundered in turn, and after investing in a number of apparently sure winners, the witty and redoubtable Michael found that of all the plunder he had brought into the gay capital, the little restaurant, which had come to him through some of his own charity, proved to be the best investment of all.


During the days when the gay Monsieur Rennells was sight-seeing and drinking wine, he had for boon companions one or two of the French nobility, who initiated and introduced him, and in a general way, while the gay Michael was footing the bills, took especial care of him.

It was during these days that a certain little French chef, an especial favorite of Monsieur Rennells, asked a loan to buy the café from the widow of a man recently deceased, which the liberal Irishman granted.

At first, Monsieur Rennells, accompanied by some scion of the nobility, would drop into the café of the little chef's; and, after drinking a little wine, would, as they strolled down the boulevard, tell his friend he hoped the poor devil would make it pay.

Being continually with these scions of the French nobility who were living on the memories of the past, had enabled Monsieur Rennells to pick up a certain amount of French polish, and at that period as he marched down the Boulevard smoking his cigarette, with his beard cut a la Française, dressed in the emblem of French respectability, the frock coat, he was to all appearances, a native Frenchman.

Monsieur Rennells, and his companions at the time above mentioned, met daily at the little restaurant in the Latin quarter, where his good nature and his jokes delighted the habitués of the place.



All this time the Monsieur's appearance was growing more shabby. His frock coat shone more than his shoes; his trousers grew baggy at the knees; but he continued drinking his wine and telling his stories.

Monsieur Rennells had never asked the little Frenchman for the money he had loaned him, nor could the late proprietor have paid him if he had, as he never seemed to get any richer. The Frenchman had done a great deal better, he had provided Monsieur Rennells with a comfortable room, and the Monsieur ate his meals in the restaurant, had his favorite seat, and told his favorite stories; and a mutual understanding seemed to exist between them; when the little chef, after a short illness, passed on the long, long journey, and left the business to Monsieur Rennells.

Before Monsieur Rennells (Mike Reynolds) had left New York, Royal and Mike were bosom friends; and it was to this café Royal now wended his way. Having located the place, Royal entered, and in a few moments was seen to emerge with a dapper little Frenchman, and together they proceeded down one of the narrow streets until they came to an unpretentious dwelling, the little Frenchman letting himself and Royal in with his latch-key. After introducing Royal to his wife, she provided him with the best room the house afforded.

The events that Royal had passed through during the past forty-eight hours were such that his troubled brain would not allow him to sleep, and when he did it was in a fitful way. In these short snatches of sleep the horrible tragedy would be enacted over and over again—it clung to him like a nightmare. Not being

able to sleep, he arose and sat on the edge of the bed, with elbows on knees and head resting on his hands, thinking over the tragedy; and wondering, being a fatalist, what death was mapped out for him.

Royal in his room was pacing to and fro when Monsieur Rennells arrived. After conversing for an hour or so, Rennells, who had received a considerable sum of money from Royal, went back to his restaurant. Taking the Paris directory and looking over its pages, he copied the address of an undertaker on the outskirts of the city. Proceeding there he made arrangements with the man to go to police headquarters, claim the body of Brady and give it decent burial, and erect a modest headstone with the name of Ydarb engraved on it, Brady's own name reversed.

The girls who were with Royal and Brady were detained by the Paris police; but as they knew nothing of the history of Brady, nor the man who had killed their friends, in due time were released and shadowed for a week; then the police finding no clue, the tragedy, like a great many more where the people were not prominent, was soon forgotten.

Royal had not made a move to get out of Paris, waiting until the tragedy had somewhat quieted down. The thought that his boon companion had died trying to save his life was almost more than he could endure. The time hung like a pall on him. Remorse, which comes to the gayest of the gay, preyed heavily on his mind; but in due time Monsieur Rennells procured him passports, and he at once left Paris en route for Cairo, Egypt.



CHAPTER LXXXIII.

SURGEON RAKEMAN, or Rake, as he was generally called by his friends, had arrived in Oxtou. He was bubbling over with enthusiasm. He had just received his appointment as surgeon to one of Her Majesty's ambulance corps, and which had received orders to proceed to the seat of war in South Africa.

Surgeon Rakeman was of that buoyant nature that only sees the bright side of life. He had lived all his life in Oxtou, except what time he had been at college; and his family and the Robinsons had been neighbors as long as Rake could remember. As children, Ruth and he had been at all times one and inseparable; and when, in attending one of the children's parties their parents decided that the occasion called for a carriage, the expense would be shared by the parents of both.

Rake never knew how it happened, but when he returned from college and saw Ruth, she did not appear to him the Ruth of his childhood days. Something had happened. What it was he could not describe. They were both asking themselves the same question. During the interval that they had been separated, while Rake was at college, that subtle something that steals away all the innocence of our childhood days, never to return, and leaves in its place the beginning of a world of tumult and anxiety, had happened. They were both now face to face with real life. All their childish innocence and candor had gone. They would now have to conform to the strict rules of society, and allow arti-



ficiality to take the place of the gay, free, rollicking school-boy and school-girl naturalness.

After visiting his parents Rake made haste to the residence of the Robinsons, and was informed by Mrs. Robinson that Ruth was at her uncle's, whither he made his way.

As the Reverend Charles Anderson's maid opened the door, Rake scarcely stopped in his onward rush to the study of the Doctor, having been answered in the affirmative as to whether the Doctor was at home.

"Rake, my boy, how are you?"

"Splendid, Doctor; I hope you're the same."

"Where's Ruth?" he asked, before answering several questions the Doctor had put to him.

"I don't have her society as much as I used to, Rake; she's a very busy young lady now, taken up as she is with her charitable work at the missions."

"Tell me all about these missions, Doctor. You see I've been away quite a while and have not been kept posted to all that's taken place in Oxton during my absence."

The Doctor here explained all about the missions.

"Just like Ruth, forever doing good, or trying to; there's very few young girls like her, Doctor."

"You're right, Rake; I'm sorry we haven't more in Oxton of her stamp, as they are better suited for mission work than men; besides, most of them have more money than Ruth, and that's what is required for the body. I can do without it for their spiritual needs, but Rake, my boy, I have not the heart to preach Christianity when, as in some cases, the poor people I know are hungry; religion on an empty stomach, Rake, don't

digest; and poverty is a great breeder of crime and immorality."

"Did you open the missions, Doctor?"

"No, Rake, Ruth did it during the time her father was making money in the stock market."

"That girl is so unselfish, Doctor, that it makes a fellow feel ashamed of himself to see the way she denies herself every pleasure for the benefit of others, while the majority of us are seeking all the time to amuse ourselves, seldom, if ever, thinking of anyone else."

"Well, Rake," exclaimed the Doctor, "when do you start for the front?"

"I leave to-morrow night for Aldershot, and I believe we sail the following day from Southampton."

Just then the bell rang.

"Here's Ruth now, Rake; she'll be delighted to see you."

As Ruth entered the Doctor's study, Rake hid behind the door. The Doctor, who liked a little innocent fun, told Ruth there had been a young gentleman to see her.

"Who in the world was it, uncle? Did he leave his card?"

"No, Ruth, he did not. He said he wanted an interview with you, as his business was important. He would have started to hunt you, but I told him he would have a hard time finding you."

Ruth was about to ply the Doctor with more questions when Rake emerged from behind the door.

"Rake, when did you come home? I'm delighted to see you. Is the report true I've heard that you're

going to Africa? I do hope, Rake, that you will come back safe."

"Yes, Ruth, I leave Oxton to-morrow, and in a day or two will sail for the seat of war."

They were in deep conversation when dinner was announced.

During the dinner the conversation drifted to various subjects, and, as Rake was about to discuss the war, he caught a glance from the Doctor which he took in the manner it was intended, and changed the subject.

The Doctor, after dinner, good Samaritan that he was, retired to his study, allowing the young people to spend the evening together.

"You'll excuse me, Rake, as I have some work in my study that I must prepare to-night. I will see you, however, before you leave."

Left alone, Rake and Ruth stared at each other for a few moments, the silence becoming oppressive until Ruth, with a kindly smile, asked Rake why he was so quiet; he told her he had been thinking the same thing about her. At this they both forcibly laughed at their reserved manner to each other. They were thinking of their early childhood days. Rake could not understand it; it did not seem possible that this was the Ruth of his college dreams. She seemed so much above him in every respect. They talked of one thing and then another, until the inevitable came, and the Captain's name was mentioned.

Rake had heard all about the death of the Captain, also the gossip about Ruth's being engaged to Rushton. He knew Ruth better than the majority of the people, and gave little credence to the gossip of the Rushton affair.

They had been talking about the scenes and incidents that had transpired during their infancy until the conversation had reached the climax when on the part of Rake he was almost afraid to speak. He had received the news that beyond all doubt Captain Hardesty was dead, the man that had come between him and the one whom he in his childhood days had promised a hundred times should be his little wife when he grew to manhood. He saw that Ruth had outgrown all thoughts of anything that had occurred in those days, and now looked on him more as a brother than anything else. On the part of Rake the love and admiration of his childhood days had grown with his years, and when he returned from college on his vacations and saw what a lovely young lady Ruth had grown to be, his admiration for her knew no bounds. He was in that state of conceit of young manhood where he wanted everything and had nothing. Then when Captain Hardesty came on the scene he went back to college and tried manfully to crush out of his heart the thoughts of one whose image was impressed on him, never, as he thought, to be effaced.

What his thoughts were when the news of the Captain's death reached him we will leave the reader to imagine; but now that the Captain was dead, and he himself was going away—oh, if he could only obtain a promise from her, that when he came back she would marry him, what joy it would bring to him on the eve of his departure.

There was a pause as if by mutual agreement. At last Ruth said:

"Rake, you and I have always been the best and staunchest of friends. and what I am about to say may



appear to you foolish, but unless you have changed, I believe you to be the same good, kind old Rake of boyhood days. You, of course, have heard, Rake, that Captain Hardesty has been reported as dead; also that the war office has sent us word that it cannot hold out any hope of his being alive. Still, I have read of men coming back where the evidence was as strong as this is to substantiate the Captain's death. I want you, Rake, as you cherish the memories of our childhood days, to find out, if possible, when you get to the seat of war, if any one of the officers saw the Captain killed, and if they can give you any other information about his death. At times, Rake, I still believe he lives. It has cost me an effort to confess to you, Rake, above all others, the great love I have for the Captain—and I suppose you will think me foolish to cling to any hope in the face of all the evidence they have to prove him dead, but I cannot help it," and walking to the other end of the room, she silently wept with her back turned towards him.

"Ruth, I will never leave Africa until I find Captain Hardesty or the proofs beyond all doubt of his death. You have been candid with me, Ruth, as you ever were, and I shall never betray your confidence. I respect the great love you have for the Captain, and only hope for your sake that he still lives. There have been, Ruth, many cases of men being kept prisoners; and although I think the evidence of his death is overwhelming, I will hold on to the slim chance that he lives, and will either find him or satisfy you that he is dead."

"Bless you for what you have said, Rake; you're one of the truest men that ever lived, and God will reward you for your nobleness."

"Put your hat on, Ruth, we'll see Rake home," said the Doctor, emerging from the study as Rake was about to leave.

At the door of Rake's home the Doctor wished him a farewell as he gave him a book to read on his journey. Ruth lingered a moment as she held out her hand to say good-bye, then with great emotion, murmured:

"I'll pray for your safe return, Rake, and if God so wills it, bring the Captain with you—but come back to us."

Two days later Surgeon Rakeman was on board one of the government transports on his way to Africa.

Here was a man in whose hands the one woman in all the world had placed a commission to find out if her lover still lived; if so, to bring him back to England to marry her whom he himself loved dearer than his life. What her thoughts were towards him he knew not. One thing was brought home to him very forcibly, and that was, while she possibly thought more of him than any other person, yet she did not appear to look upon him in the light of a lover. On Ruth's part, it was the love of a sister for a brother. She had romped and played with Rake as a child, and never looked upon him as anything but a foster brother. It was at the time she was emerging from the adolescent age that she first met the Captain, and thought how pleased Rake would be, when he returned from college, at her choice of a lover.

When Rake arrived in Africa he was very much disappointed at the prospects before him of ever getting any information about Captain Hardesty. He had had visions on the way out that as soon as he arrived he would at once be sent to the front. To Rake the three weeks he had to wait until he was attached to the Army



Medical Corps seemed as if the game of war was the science of delay. He was young and full of energy, and wanted to go ahead and accomplish something. He was all-important—in the eyes of Rake only. The older men looked kindly on his boyish enthusiasm. He had found that he might as well ask of the man in the moon as to seek any information about the late Captain Hardesty. Some of the Captain's regiment were in England, having been invalided home, and others scattered in various parts of Africa. However, he had the good fortune to meet with one of the minor officers who had been in the engagement of Spion's Kop, and who told him that, according to the evidence that Rake had, it was a million to one that the Captain was dead, and that he could save himself a useless lot of trouble and worry by not attempting to find out anything more about him, as no one could ever enlighten him beyond what he already knew.



CHAPTER LXXXIV.

THE love of Rake for Ruth was that pure love that is born in man, and which he holds in most cases until the world with its endless struggle to make a living, and the chicanery he meets with helps to wear off the romantic side of life. Then again, he is thrown down with a sickening thud by some scoundrel he thought the soul of honor; and possibly in his love affairs some artless vixen jilts him until he begins to think there are no true people in the world.

Rake had as yet to go through all this. At the present time he was full of romance and chivalry. The trials and vicissitudes of this life would no doubt test his mettle. He was as yet in the crude ore state. He would have to be puddled, pounded and tempered before he could be warranted free from alloy.

This is a sore world, and the man who comes through the fire and remains true blue is worthy of the name in its highest sense. How many of us fall by the wayside!

Rake's nature was buoyant and bubbling over with the milk of human kindness. What Ruth asked of him was more than the average man would think of undertaking with any degree of sincerity. To Rake it was a trust from the one being in all the world whom he loved. He had no bitter feelings against the Captain, although this man, as stated, had come between him and the girl he had known from childhood, ever waiting for the time to come when he could make her his wife. He was at the present time as God ordained



man, true as steel. Would he stand the test? Would he remain true and keep faith in the self-sacrificing compact he had made with Ruth—that he would bring either the proofs of the Captain's death that never could be refuted, or bring him back if he lived?

Rake, who had influence in the right quarter, was soon appointed to one of the scouting columns. There had been some slight skirmishing between this scouting column and the Boers; but in making the stealthy night marches to surround the enemy, they generally found on arriving at the scene of the Boers' camp that the birds had flown.

The officer in command of this detachment of British soldiers was a thorough up-to-date soldier, devoid of the old traditions of warfare. He did not wish to strew the veldt with the bodies of his men by allowing them to sacrifice themselves in a useless attempt to capture three times their number on their own fighting ground, only to have it recorded in the annals of British battles how they had stood to the last man, neither asking or taking quarter; nor, did he believe in bucking a stone wall when a flank movement would be much better.

This British officer would listen to and cajole with any of the Boers that had submitted to British rule, but he was never deceived by any of them—he was English, and they were Boers, and blood was thicker than water.

When this column arrived at any of the Boer farms this officer gave orders to bring the inhabitants to him; but they seldom found any men except they were very old, or cripples—all of the able-bodied Boers were at the front fighting.

The British soldiers had marched incessantly, except for a rest of two hours, for two days and nights, and as the column stealthily approached where the Boers were supposed to be encamped, the officer in command was informed by his scouts that the wily Boer had taken his departure.

Taking the deserted camp of the Boers, the officer ordered a much needed rest; but not before he had taken such precautions that no Boers could double on him without being apprised in due time of their approach.

When the party of British soldiers that had been reconnoitering returned, they brought with them, as they supposed, a Boer whom they had found working in the fields belonging to the owner of the farm they had surrounded. Taking him into the presence of the commanding officer, the man was put through the first degree to get from him what information they could pertaining to the Boers. But to all the officer's questions he simply stared, never speaking a word. The officer, a brainy fellow, saw at a glance that the man was deranged. While this captured man was being searched he acted in such a simple manner as to remove at once any idea that he was shamming. Bringing one of the women from the Boer farm into the presence of the officer, she, on being interrogated as to the condition of the man, tapped her head to denote that the man was an imbecile.

The captured man was a physical marvel in appearance; but his unkempt beard with the grime and dirt on his face gave him the appearance of one who had not used soap or water for a long time. When released he went back to work in the field as if such a thing as war did not exist.

There was one man, however, in the British column whom this Boer seemed to fascinate, and as he resumed his work in the field, he followed, and watched him as he worked. Except for the man's physical appearance, he was the most woe-begone looking creature it would be possible to find, either on the Bowery in New York, or in Whitechapel, London. The coarse clothes he wore, the cowhide boots, his matted hair and beard—all added to his slovenliness. With all this there was something about the man that seemed to fascinate and interest Surgeon Rakeman. He asked himself what it could be? Was it the voice? Was it the eyes? He was looking long and steadily at him when the man turned abruptly and stared at him. That look! "My God!" he exclaimed—his heart almost ceased beating. Yes, those were his eyes,—but no, he must be dreaming—it could never be—then what did it all mean? He would instantly find out. Taking the man's left hand in his own he pushed back the coarse shirt sleeve. With a fervent "O, merciful God!" he dropped the man's hand and flung his arms around his neck—yes, there was the proof—the initials were there—it was none other than Captain Hardesty; a fracture of the skull having deprived him of his reason.

Rake, who was a fair amateur boxer, had on several occasions when home from college on vacations, boxed with Captain Hardesty and had often noticed the Captain's initials pricked in India ink in a crude school-boy fashion on his arm.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

ALL the grand hopes that Rake had formed of bringing back beyond any possibility of doubt the proofs of Captain Hardesty's death were crushed within him. Now that he had found the Captain, his great love for Ruth never seemed so strong in its overpowering mastery of him. He had visions of returning from Africa with the proofs of the Captain's death, then in due time, marrying Ruth. Now all was over. He was crushed completely. The dream of his life had vanished.

"If I let him stay here he will go on working and end his days as a farm laborer. He is a harmless imbecile. His reason has completely left him,—then she'll be mine," he murmured.

The fire raging in his brain as he lay on the veldt was a conflict between love and duty. Which would win? He attempted to rise, but the horror of leaving Captain Hardesty to his fate crushed him.

He seemed on the verge of collapse, when, remembering his mother's early teaching when in trouble, it gave him courage. There on the veldt in Africa, this young soldier, with head bowed, knelt and prayed.

Surgeon Rakeman was waging a battle to conquer that which has wrecked cities and destroyed empires; which has put at naught and brushed aside all reason. The cleverest, brainiest, who in all other things have had the greatest moral balance, have been brought down and made pygmies of by their love for a woman

—that which has defied all time and all tests of friendship and honor.

With brain afire he played long and earnestly for strength to overcome his all-devouring love for Ruth. His prayer at last was answered. He was in the presence of his Maker. All worldliness had left him. God had created in him a clean heart. He bounded to his feet and wept for joy. The devilish force that had advised him to leave the Captain to his fate had fled. The spirit of God was working within him—the spirit of love and tenderness—always forgiving.

Placing his hands on the Captain's shoulders, he exclaimed :

"I will bring you back to her whose every hope breathes of you; who only lives that she may see you again; but your safety demands that for the present I must use discretion."

The battle, the greatest man is ever called upon to fight, he had won; but the credit for the victory belonged to his angel mother, who had reared him in the path of truth and righteousness, and whose gray hairs were crowned with glory, the halo of which shone in her countenance as she nightly prayed for her son's safe return.

The sudden burst of the bugle brought Rake back to the realization of his surroundings. Quickly recovering himself, he made up his mind that he would not divulge who the man was to the Boer women for fear they could remove him to another farm, as it was very evident he was valuable to them, he being the only able-bodied man for miles around, every Boer who was able to shoulder a musket being at the front.

Rake had located the exact place of the Boer farm, and knowing the uncertainty of many of the column ever seeing England again, he made a memorandum as to who the supposed Boer was that was working on the farm, giving full particulars as to the man's mental condition. He had now eased his conscience, and felt greatly relieved at knowing that should anything happen to him, the papers in his pocket would insure the Captain's ultimate return to England.



CHAPTER LXXXVI.

THE night following the events of the last chapter found the British column making all haste to its base of supplies, the railroad. They had had a short sharp brush with the Boers, and had been severely handled; but with dogged obstinacy had refused to surrender, time and again making a stand to keep off the stealthy Boer who refused to come to close quarters. The next day saw them safe within striking distance of the railroad.

Kimberly, Mafeking, Ladysmith, and other besieged cities had all been relieved, and except for a brush now and then, there was not expected to be any more serious fighting.

Rake applied for and received an extended leave of absence. There were now more troops in South Africa than were needed. The men that were wanted at the present time were mounted infantry, good scouts and sure shots; men that could fight the Boer after his own method of warfare, and not make a target of themselves. The war had taught, at a fearful price, this lesson to the British; and Kitchener now began to put it in force.

While preparing at once either to bring Captain Hardesty to one of the cities, or go out, and taking nurses with him, operate on him himself, Surgeon Rakeman finally made up his mind that under no circumstances would he bring the Captain to any of the cities. He knew the Boers well enough to feel satis-

fied that if they went without arms they would not be molested.

Rake now had time to think; yes, he had come near being false to his God, false to himself, and false to the woman who had placed such a sacred trust in him.

As Rake finished soliloquizing, he could not suppress a cynical smile at his own vanity.

"Yes, I boasted to myself when on the steamer, how I would unearth the Captain if he were alive, and bring him home. I even likened myself to the Newfoundland dog that had saved its master's life, and, like the dog, had visions of the affectionate caresses for my noble and unselfish conduct."

But when he thought of the unselfishness of the dumb brute, he winced.

"Ah," continued he, "how we rant and prate of our great affection, when at the very first trial, our love fails miserably, or we look for an excuse to crawl out of doing that which we had boastfully declared, with a flourish of trumpets, we would do, or die trying—Vain-glorious man!"



CHAPTER LXXXVII.

DOCTOR PAUL OUTERBRIDGE, the great New York brain specialist, had arrived by the last steamer which landed its passengers at Durban. This doctor had, while on a visit to England, delivered a lecture on brain diseases; and had become greatly impressed with Rake's earnestness at the lecture, as it was understood that Rake was to make his life's work a study of the brain.

Judge of Rake's surprise when, as he was hurrying his preparations for the operation on the Captain, he should meet Doctor Outerbridge in Cape Town. The Doctor had been sent for to try to save the life of a son of a New York millionaire, who had joined the British forces, and had just finished the operation and left the patient in the hands of two physicians, when he met Rake.

The one man in all the world whom he would have preferred to meet at the present time was Doctor Outerbridge—and he was here. He could hardly believe his good fortune.

"Rake, you're a noble fellow. Get this man into some hospital and I'll perform the operation."

Rake then went more fully into the details, stating the romance of the case; and informed Doctor Outerbridge that, all things considered, he reasoned that the Boer farm was the proper place, as in the event of the

operation proving fatal, no one would be any the wiser.

"Make everything ready for the journey, Rake, and I'll bring my assistant along and we'll see if we can't pull this friend of yours through."

"Doctor, you've lifted a weight off my heart; and, with all the other kindnesses I've received at your hands, I'm afraid I'll be forever in your debt."

"Tut, tut, Rake, my boy. Life is short at its longest period, and if I can be of any service in doing a good turn for any of my old students, you can rest assured that it gives me great pleasure. When do we start?"

"I'll have everything ready to-morrow, Doctor."

There is nothing eventful to narrate in the journey of the two doctors to the Boer farm. They were stopped once or twice by small parties of Boers; but on being told their mission were allowed to proceed with a "God speed you on your journey."

When they arrived at the farm the Captain was there, doing the farm work as usual.

They put the Captain under a course of treatment and in three days his system was in good condition for the anæsthetic.

Doctor Outerbridge wanted Rake to perform the operation.

"No, Doctor, not for all the money in South Africa. Don't, Doctor, I beg of you, ask me to do it. I may explain after the operation is over."

The appealing look that Rake gave his professional brother was such that Doctor Outerbridge pressed him no further.

The Captain submitted like a child to the anæsthetic. When he was well under the influence of the ether, Doctor Outerbridge having previously decided the exact spot where he intended to operate, cut out of the skull a small button, first laying back the scalp. As the Doctor raised the button he called Rake's attention to the small blood clot on the brain, saying:

"Rake, I have the greatest faith in this operation being a complete success, as there has been no permanent injury to any of the tissues, and in the course of time your friend ought to be as well as ever."

"I'm glad the operation has proved as successful as you anticipated, Doctor, after all your trouble in coming to such an outlandish place to perform it. If the case had not proved a success, the Captain would never have seen England. He was perfectly content on this farm, and here I'd have let him stay. If he had arrived in England an imbecile, he would have brought misery to one of the truest, purest and noblest of women. I reasoned it all out, and put myself in his place."

"Well, it's all over now, Rake, my boy; and you'll be the proudest man in all England when you both arrive there together."

"The glory and honor belong to you, Doctor, for your great kindness."

"Rake, I'll never see the young lady you speak of, and all I ask of you is, that if you can be of any service to some poor devil who has not the means to pay for a doctor, do so, and think of me."

"Doctor, I'll give you my word that never during my professional career will my services be called for in vain, money or no money."



"That's got the true ring to it, Rake; I like to hear you talk like that; and remember a poor patient's blessing invariably brings you a rich one."

Nature, assisted by the Captain's wonderful constitution, worked wonders. The time soon came when the doctors deemed it prudent to allow him to explain, if explain he could, how his skull became fractured. Rake related how by a mere chance he happened to find him, and that he was to all appearances a typical Boer farmer.

"You were the most contented man, Captain, that I ever saw in my life."

"Rake, I owe you and this noble doctor friend of yours my life, and how I am ever going to repay you both is more than I can tell."

"My good fellow," said Doctor Outerbridge, "it won't be very long before we're all back again in dear old London enjoying ourselves, and looking back on these scenes, mixed as they are with the salts and sweets, as mere incidents on our journey through life."

"Give us an account if you can, Captain, of how you received the fracture, and how your coat came to be on the body of a dead man? You're the deadeast man among your friends in England,—with the exception of the solitary ONE who would not believe you dead—no, not in the face of the evidence of your tunic being brought home, and her last letter to you in the breast pocket covered with what was supposed to be your life's blood. Everyone,—yes, I might as well tell you, Captain,—everyone thought that she was mentally deranged in holding out against such overwhelming evidence, that you still lived. I will explain more fully later; but towards the last, to keep peace in the family,



she appeared to admit to them—understand—to them and the outside world, but not to her inner self—that you were dead. Coming away, she, as I have told you, Captain, placed her life in my hands, for if I had not found you, I believe it would have killed her.”

“All that I can remember, Rake, is that when night came on the day of the battle on Spion’s Kop, the bugle sounded a retreat. Making my way, where, I knew not at the time, as I was almost crazed with thirst, excitement, and the general disorder of the blunder, the first thing that struck my eyes was young Brooks, of our regiment, lying on his back crying for water. Oh, Rake, when I think of it! His mother came to London to see him off the day we sailed. I was then introduced to her. I can now recall her face. She seemed loth to part with her darling boy, as she called him. Never will I forget her yearning look when the time came for them to part. She could not speak—her arms encircling his neck as kind hands parted them—and the last I saw of him was with his life’s blood ebbing away.”

The Captain at this point of his story was very much affected. Recovering his composure, he proceeded:

“I stooped and raised his head; he once more appealed piteously for water. Vainly trying the canteens of those that had fallen, I found one that contained a few drops and hurried as best my exhausted condition would allow. As I moistened the poor fellow’s lips, he complained of the cold. Taking off my tunic, I had no difficulty, being so much larger, in putting it on him. I could see that he was done for. He asked me, if I was spared, to see his mother and tell her his dying breath was of her—and to tell her for his sake not to grieve.



Rake, I dread this meeting more than I did the Boer bullets. He still begged once more for water, and I made up my mind that I would procure him some at all hazards. It had now become quite dark, and I had not proceeded many yards when I was captured by the Boers. They were just about to retreat, and, having plenty of horses, I was given a mount, and of course had to accept their company. They marched all that night and the following day until sunset. At dawn the next morning the Boer scouts came back with the news that a large body of our troops were right in front of them. A running battle ensued. Our troops had a battery of artillery in position, and the rapidity with which they peppered the Boers was something awful; how any of them and your humble servant escaped, heaven only knows. The air seemed for the time being—well, you'd think hell had let loose all the dogs of war the way the shells screeched and roared around our heads. It was a helter-skelter race, the Boers not having a minute to lose to avoid being captured, as cavalry had been sent to head them off. I was taking every advantage of the Boers being so hard pressed with a view of making my escape—when the next thing that I saw that I remember (with a smile at both men) was yourself and the Doctor. That's all I know, Rake. How I received the fracture will, I suppose, remain a mystery; though most likely I was hit by a splinter from one of the shells fired by our men. It seems they had destroyed every vestige of my clothing and given me the rig in which you found me."

"A regular Rip Van Winkle affair, Captain."



CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

DURING these days of the Captain's convalescence, no matter how the conversation began, it always turned to Ruth and the Robinson family. He never seemed to tire asking the most minute questions. Rake at times was somewhat of a mystery to him. In an unguarded moment on several occasions, when the conversation as usual drifted around to Ruth, Rake would forget himself by something that the Captain had said, and the flame of love being rekindled, he, in his passion and adoration for her, would flare up to such a degree that Captain Hardesty would stare in blank amazement. He could understand the great respect that Rake had for Ruth on account of their being children together; but if he was any judge of human nature, there was more than respect in his manner whenever Ruth's name was mentioned. He could not understand. He had been made a confidant of by Ruth, it appeared, and had pledged himself to find, if possible, if her lover lived. If Rake was in love with Ruth, then he was the most noble man he had ever met in his life.

Rake was bearing his cross nobly. His love for Ruth, unknown to anyone but himself, was at all times smouldering in his heart, and each time her name was mentioned it would burst into flame. To hide his emotion on more than one occasion he had abruptly to leave the Captain's presence, and at such times thought "what might have been."



He told the Captain that since the Robinson failure the people would have nothing to do with Ruth's father; then went fully into all that Robinson had told him about the mine—the amount of stock Robinson had, and how, according to his statement, they could all make a fortune if the mine was worked legitimately.

"What do you say the name of the mine is, Rake?"

"The 'Jack-Pot,' and is situated at Black Hawk, near Denver, Colorado, America—and don't laugh, Captain, for you know how I respect Ruth's father, but they call the old gent 'Jack-Pot.' You see, ever since he failed he has been trying to interest people to go out to the States and inspect the mine. I've never been, as you know, to the States; but I believe, from all I have heard from Robinson, that his ideas are sound. At the time he invested in this mine a gang of sharpers had control of it; but when it was run legitimately it was about the best paying mine in the States."

"Rake, something must be done. I'm in a bad predicament. I have no money and no prospects of any. You're aware, Rake, I suppose, that I was reared like a great many others, with great expectations—which in my case have failed to materialize; then, to cap the climax, my uncle, who is very rich, swore that if I joined the army he would disinherit me. All I have at the present time is my pay as an army captain, and which barely keeps me in a decent state of appearance. Before joining the army I was offered several places in a business way from some of my college chums whose people are in trade; but at the time I, like a great many more, wanted to see something of life, and incidentally have a little independence of my own. Rake, I must leave the army and engage in some busi-

ness that will enable me to provide for Ruth and her family. You tell me they all think I'm dead, and dead I'll remain (that is, to them), if I don't get into something whereby I can make some money. I must be cruel to be kind. I could never stand it if I went back to England and saw, as you tell me, Ruth's father growing childish over his losses. You say, Rake, that when the people see Robinson coming, they say, 'Look out, here comes old Jack-Pot!' "

"That's what they say, Captain."

"That's sad, Rake, very sad. He must have lost all his former prestige."

"Yes, Captain; we're both friends of the family and can talk confidentially about them. He is virtually a pauper, and I believe from what he dropped one night when he had an extra glass—don't misunderstand me, Captain, and suppose that he indulges in the flowing bowl, for I don't believe he ever gets the chance. This night, however, and the only time I ever saw him mellow, he gave me to understand that if certain things occurred, he'd 'be out of this damned poverty,' and the way it was said, I believe that Rushton has promised, if Ruth marries him, to do something for the old gent, but that wedding will never take place when she hears that you are alive."

Captain Hardesty was one of the most broad minded and deep thinking of men. He would not allow wrath to interfere with right. All the time that Rake was describing the rise and fall of the Robinsons in the social world, and their extreme poverty at the present time (for Rake, of course, knew nothing of the golden calf that Mrs. Robinson was worshipping, which in turn paid over a few shekels when called on



by the worshipper), he was thinking how he could retrieve their lost fortune and prestige.

"Tell me once more all about the mine that Robinson is interested in, Rake, and your opinion of what you think of it from all that you have heard."

Rake here described all he knew of the Jack-Pot mine, stating that Robinson had enough of the stock to control it.

"You believe that previous to the gang of sharpers getting control it was a good dividend payer?"

"Robinson showed me reports of the mine before it flooded, Captain, which were wonderful."

"Since listening to you, Rake, I have been thinking of a plan which, if successful, would be the means of making a fortune for both of us. Throwing out the time the gang of sharpers had control of the mine, its history previous to that must have been of the best; of that I'm certain. I reason this way, Rake. The sharpers simply took in the unwary on the past record of the mine, stating that they had pumped it dry, and the mine was once more paying as it did in former years. We can rest assured that before going into this swindle the sharpers knew that the public would be liable to bite at the bait.

"The plan, Rake, is simply this: Sanders, as you are aware, is a mining engineer, and conceded to be one of the best for his years in Great Britain. My idea is to write to him and explain all that you have told me about the mine; also ask him to see Robinson, and investigate the history of the mine before the sharpers got hold of it. The one great feature about the undertaking is that, he being an engineer, we would not be at the mercy of any one. Sanders, of all the



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men I know, is the only one whom a scheme of this kind would be liable to strike. You see, Rake, he does not spend half his income, and is not given to excesses of any kind. Gold mining has always been his dream, and this undertaking may just suit him."

"I'll write at once, enjoining him to silence. Whether he goes into this or not, he will certainly, according to what you have told me, Rake, think this a letter from the dead."

The letter was sent to Richard Sanders and was forwarded from London to Scotland, where he was shooting grouse on the Scotch moors. We will leave the reader to judge his surprise at receiving a letter from his old college chum whom he and everybody else supposed dead.



CHAPTER LXXXIX.

DICK SANDERS sat on a log smoking. He had refilled his pipe for the third time. The gamekeepers and two of his friends who were shooting with him, thought that he was anchored. While the gamekeepers stood at a respectful distance, his friends approached, and seeing the letter in his hand, jokingly asked :

"What's the matter, Dick? Has she thrown you over? Which one is it, the Colonel's daughter or the little soubrette from the Empire?"

"You're wrong there, Harry," said Tom Digby. "It's Mrs. Wiggins who wants him to declare his intentions; you know she's got six daughters and is bound Dick shall marry one of them. Which one is it going to be, Dick?"

"By Jove, you're right there, Tom—after Dick marries one of them he can take the matrimonial agency off his mother-in-law's hands; she's had a hard time with those girls. Look at the relations you'll have, Dick, when they are all nicely married; Mrs. Wiggins pities your loneliness."

Dick Sanders still sat on the log and smiled at the jokes of his companions. He continued smoking and once more read the letter; then he pulled on his pipe and read it again.

"Well, I've heard of fellows, when they were bowled over by some fickle jade, acting queer; but blow me if

I ever heard of them losing their speech," said Sanders's friend Harry, who was somewhat of a wag. "Who's the fair lady, Dick? Come, tell us about her; you know Tom and I might be able to give you some consolation."

Dick Sanders knocked the ashes out of his pipe and joined his companions. In answer to their jokes he told them that the letter was in reference to a little private matter where there were no ladies interested. This letter set him thinking; there was something else on his mind besides the great joy of knowing that his old college chum was alive; and this letter of the Captain's, with the plan he had outlined about the mine, was the very thing. Yes, it would be the means of making her decide. She could not play fast and loose with him. He was tired of it all, and a trip to the States would be the means of making her show her hand. He did not believe in placing his affections on a girl with two strings to her bow.

"I'll go and see this fellow, Robinson; get all the particulars, and then if she will not give me the answer I want I'll put the Atlantic between us. Perhaps when I come back she'll have come to her senses; however, this will be the means of deciding it one way or the other. I'll be out of the way, and if she intends marrying the Colonel, this will give her the chance she has possibly been looking for."

Captain Hardesty's letter had arrived at the most opportune time. Dick Sanders, along with several other suitors, was seeking the hand of Sir Archibald Fairbrother's daughter, Lorice. He had left London to keep himself from dropping in too often to see her,

and taking the chances of meeting other suitors, only to come away as he did each time in a ruffled state of mind. The Scotch moors, however, were altogether too near, as he found himself, after making up his mind to stay away, rushing back to London on the Scotch Limited, just for the mere whim of seeing her; then something would cause his proud, sensitive nature to rebel at some supposititious slight, and back to the Scotch moors he would go.

Dick Sanders was in love—and it wasn't running very smoothly. So, dear reader, you must not form any bad opinion of Mr. Sanders, as you know how foolish and at times ridiculous we appear when smitten with some fair one who is just a little coquettish.

Mr. Richard Sanders could not have received much encouragement from the fair Lorice, as we find him in anything but a happy frame of mind as he boarded the train for Birkenhead with the intention of gaining what information he could from Robinson about the mine; and to get his terms for working the same, if he thought favorably of the undertaking. This trip to the States would do him all kinds of good; besides, if this mine did not warrant his taking hold, he would put several months at least in and around the mines in different parts of the country. He had taken first honors in civil and mining engineering, and had spent considerable time in the mines in England. He would, no doubt, pick up in the States some engineer who had spent most of his time in the mining industry, and under such a man would continue his hobby.

Having made satisfactory arrangements with Robinson, Dick Sanders went back to London to pack up for his American trip.

In due time Captain Hardesty received a letter stating that Sanders was packing up for the trip, and for him and his friend Rake to take the first steamer to the States.

"Just like Dick; as impulsive as ever. This letter, Rake, must have struck him at the right time. I suppose he is tired of doing the drawing-room act, and wants to get out of the city and see some of the world. You will have to get an extended leave of absence, Rake, and I will have to stay under cover until we are safe on board of the steamer. I suppose Dr. Outerbridge will not forget himself about my resurrection?"

"No danger, Captain. I explained everything to him, and I know he'll be careful not to do so."

"I know from what you've told me of him that he would not for a moment do it intentionally; but you know these medical men," and he cast a sly glance at Rake, "are liable when talking shop to narrate their operations."

"Have no fear of Dr. Outerbridge, Captain; he is taciturnity itself at times."

"I'm glad to hear that, Rake, as it would be disgraceful for the people in Oxton to hear about it and not get a letter; I feel like the devil at times, but I must control myself, at least until we see what luck we have with the mine."

There was a steamer lying in Durban that had just discharged a large number of mules brought from New Orleans, and was about to return to the States.

"Rake," said the Captain, as they boarded the steamer, "no matter how we look at the situation, I

know I'm guilty in deserting the army in this manner, and if I did not know my services can very well be dispensed with, as they are sending regiment after regiment back to England, I would never leave the country; but in our case, or rather in my situation, the end justifies the means I have taken. You ought to have taken me on board, Rake, when I was *non compos mentis*, then the authorities would not have been able to enforce the iron rule of discipline."

"I'll fix that, Captain, after we make our pile. You see I'm becoming a regular Yankee before we reach the country. I must give the Americans credit for having the most apt words; it quite enlivens our prosaic style of English."

After the excitement of getting away from the coast of Africa was over, Rake, who had not been many days on board before he was calling the sailors by their first names, borrowed a set of boxing gloves which one of them had on board. It was a rare treat to see these manly fellows exchanging cuts, hooks and swings, with now and then a right or left cross-counter that would have done credit to a professional of the manly art. Rake and the Captain, before the voyage was over, had boxed with nearly all the members of the crew, and it was wonderful to witness the good terms this exercise established between them.

The tramp steamer arrived safely at New Orleans, and as our friends walked down the gang-plank we may judge of their surprise when a person walked in between them, taking hold of an arm on each side—it was our new acquaintance, Dick Sanders. We will pass over the joyous meeting that took place and follow them to their hotel.



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The Captain had cabled to Sanders before embarking, giving the name and destination of the steamer.

Taking the Cunard steamer from Liverpool on the Saturday, and landing in New York on the following Saturday, Sanders had proceeded direct to New Orleans and had been there some time before Rake and the Captain arrived; so that on their arrival he had engaged suitable rooms at the hotel for all three.

When the particulars of the Captain's discovery and the operation had been told to Sanders, he grasped Rake's hand, vowing eternal friendship for him.

After they had thrown off their sea legs, and taken in the sights of the city, Sanders said:

"Now, gentlemen, let us get down to business. Robinson has made me a fair proposition in regard to the mine; and I'll give it to you in as condensed a form as I can. He owns stock enough to just about control it, and I am to go ahead and do what I think best, and for the money I invest we share in the profits—if the mine proves a winner. Now, boys, I intend to split my share of the profits into three equal parts,—that is, if I make up my mind to take hold after I see the condition of affairs when we get to Black Hawk."

"I suppose we'll have to let you have your own way, Dick, but I think you're too generous," replied the Captain.

Spending a few days in Denver, in which time Sanders had picked up a good mining engineer—one of the old school, thoroughly practical, and less theoretical than those of the present day; and who during his short acquaintance with Sanders had formed a strong

liking for the rich young Englishman, a liking which seemed to be mutual, as Sanders told Rake and Jack that he was very much pleased with their new acquaintance, as he seemed a good, whole-souled fellow. His unassuming ways, with his quaint sayings, pleased our friends, and with an almost wild enthusiasm utterly devoid of friction, this quartette went thoroughly into everything pertaining to the Jack-Pot mine.

They spent many days making trips to all the mines within striking distance of Denver, to which their new acquaintance seemed to have an entry, showing at least he must be popular, and by no means a bad fellow.

The consensus of opinion of the Jack-Pot mine was the same everywhere they went,—that if they could pump it out it would surely pay—and pay well—to the parties that put their money in it.

At a meeting among our friends that night it was decided to take hold, and if possible pump out the mine. In a short time the pumps were working night and day, never for a moment ceasing. The water slowly abated. The three partners were jubilant; then, although the pumps were kept going night and day for two weeks, it did not abate an inch. They had merely pumped out the surface water that had drained in through the fissures in the rocks.

"It's my belief," said Sanders, "that when the mine was running they tapped a subterranean lake."

Griddles, the mining engineer, guessed Sanders had struck the nail on the head.

Procuring the map of the inner workings of the mine, Sanders and Griddles spent most of the night poring over it. It was an anxious time to our other



two friends, as all their bright hopes of future happiness were based on this mine proving a success.

For countless ages the snow that had fallen each winter on these mountains, when spring came, had melted, and running through the fissures in the rocks, had formed an underground lake, how large or what depth no one could tell. The day had come when this lake or subterranean river had been tapped; and there was no doubt enough water waiting to pour in to fill the Jack-Pot mine twice over, or they could keep on pumping for an indefinite period. Royal's men had found this out, but kept it, as we are aware, very quiet; the people thinking they had never tried to pump out the mine—which was wrong—but which would have made no difference with the late firm's intention of swindling the public.

In mining circles in and around Denver and Black Hawk, the people were already talking of the crazy Englishmen trying to pump out the mine.

The two engineers, with Jack and Rake as their chain-holders, climbed and worked around the mountain; and when night came Sanders and Griddles would pore over the plans until late.

"It can be done, Sanders; but damn it, man, it will cost a fortune, and then you don't know whether she'll pay or not. It's a gamble pure and simple; and the most stupendous undertaking I've ever had to do with."

"You're satisfied the plan will drain the mine, Griddles?" queried Sanders.

"Nothing to stop it; she'll be as dry as a bone, if you have money enough to put the scheme through.



You've got nerve, Sanders, to take hold of such a gigantic undertaking, and as I admire such men as you, I would like to warn you once more of the enormous expense; and if you haven't got unlimited wealth, or can't get unlimited backing, damn it—I'd hate like the devil to see you lose your money when it was half way through. You couldn't get a red cent to put into such a scheme in or around these parts; but if you do undertake it, I'll stand by you to the last ditch—you can bank on that, Sanders."

"I'm thankful for your kind consideration on my behalf, Mr. Griddles, and if everything comes out all right, you'll be well taken care of."

The undertaking that the engineers had planned was to tap the mountain in which the mine was situated, hoping thereby to drain all the water out of it.

When the engineers, Sanders and Griddles, had finished their survey, there was a meeting held among the four members of the company. Sanders, after finding that Griddles was the man he wanted, paid him a salary and gave him a small interest in the undertaking.

What won't money do, backed by four strong, energetic men who do not know what the word defeat means? They went at this stupendous task, that would have frightened no inconsiderable number of engineers, intending to brush aside all obstacles.

Sanders and Griddles, leaving Rake and Jack in Black Hawk, hurried to Chicago, from there to New York, and back to Black Hawk. The trip they had taken was for the purpose of procuring the necessary machinery, such as drills and other innumerable tools. This—the purchasing part of the undertaking—had



been left entirely to Griddles to select, on account of his great experience.

From Black Hawk the news of the great undertaking had traveled in all directions, and each day brought miners from all parts of the country who had been attracted by the chance of obtaining work, as at that time the mining industry was not very brisk. Here was another place where Griddles showed his sterling worth. He could scent a good, honest miner, and having his pick of the men, it was not long before he had about him as fine a body of miners as there was to be found in the States.

When the engineers had decided, after the most careful survey, the exact level, after allowing the necessary flow that would have to be given the water to insure its draining itself, the drills were started, and as fast as possible men were being put to work and broke in under the careful eye of Griddles as to what was expected of them for a day's work. Shanties for sharpening tools and dug-outs for the miners to sleep in were erected, and in an incredibly short time the tunnel assumed something of the appearance of the stupendous undertaking it was undoubtedly emerging into. The scoffers who had jeered at this hair-brained young Englishman and his friends, who had come to the States to sink their money in a ditch, now began to look upon the undertaking in a more serious light.

Sanders had his English ideas very vividly in his mind; but the only Griddles, with his quaint humor and his easy, unassuming ways, with a certain get-there style about him, was fast knocking them out of the head of our friend.



"I say, Griddles, how the devil are we going to get permission from the owners of the property that our tunnel runs through?"

"If they are stronger than we are they'll have to be fixed; and that part you leave to me. You need not worry about any of these troubles, Sanders, as I'll fix the whole shooting match when the time comes. There's nothing around here I can't fix. I know the boys and they'll stand by me; and as for the law part of it, I'll fix that."

"By gad, Griddles, I think you can fix anything. I wish I'd have come across you in England, I'd have had you f—"

"Come, out with it."

"Oh, that's all right, Griddles—some other time," replied Sanders smilingly.

Sanders, in his good humor at Griddles brushing away as mere trifles what appeared to him mountains of trouble, was on the point of saying he would have had Griddles fix the breach between himself and the fair Lorice, but as seen, immediately checked himself.

Rake and our friend Jack, as the reader is aware, were both college-bred men; and while lacking knowledge about mines and mining, were, as Griddles expressed it, "chock, block full of theory," but he would soon shape them to take hold of more practical work.

Griddles had picked the best of his workmen and placed them at the head of each of the gangs of miners. These foremen were then placed in the hands of Rake and Jack, who, with their knowledge of mathematics, could figure out in an instant what amount of this and that the men required. In a short time, as the tunnel



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progressed, a person who had known these three Englishmen in their native country would never have recognized them as they worked with the gangs of men, dressed in overalls and blue flannel shirts.

Sitting just a little apart from the miners on anything that was handy, and sometimes on the ground, at meal times these three aristocratic Englishmen took whatever the cook gave them with as good a grace as anything Belgravia ever offered, served with the fairest of hands.

"What's the chef provided to-day? Ah, by heavens! 'Tis food for the gods," said Sanders one day as he cut with his jack-knife a slice of bacon which lay on the top of a huge piece of dry bread, and which, washed down with some rare old boot-leg coffee, constituted the meal.

"Well, boys, this is great. Do you know, we never appreciated those choice tidbits we've been fed on for years. By the time we get through with this tunnel we'll have stomachs like ostriches. We'll surprise the boys with our gastronomic powers when we get back to the little village" (London).

Griddles had been working night and day in forwarding the work of the tunnel, and told Sanders that he felt a kind of tuckered out; and as everything was in good shape, he'd take a day or two off to get some of the dust out of his lungs. The fact was that Griddles, once in every few months, had to have a little time of his own. He wanted to go around and see the boys, and—well—just blow them off, and see how things in general were moving. Going down to Denver he commenced his rounds, where we will leave him to get the dust out of his lungs.

Griddles, like many others, had his little excuses for periodically imbibing in the convivial and proverbial flowing bowl.

The day after Griddles departed, and while our friends were working with might and main in furthering the work of the tunnel, the mighty arm of the law came down on the undertaking in such a manner that everything was stopped—and no Griddles at hand to fix it.

Sanders, Jack and Rake were desperate. In cutting the tunnel a dynamite charge had blown in a section of another mine. The marshal, who had quite a number of deputies with him, read the law to Sanders, and he, with visions of the English law that no one could fix, was in a nervous quandary. He had known some cases where one stubborn Englishman had stopped work equally as gigantic as this, and through his unreasonable stubbornness the undertaking had to be given up.

Everything came to a standstill. Sanders dispatched couriers after the redoubtable Griddles in hopes of having him try his "fixing powers" on the minions of the law. Our friends fumed and chafed. Would Griddles never come? What if he should desert them? They could possibly never get another "fixer up" like him. All troubles seemed to vanish when he was around. The couriers came back from Denver without him—they were sure he had not left the city; and at each place they visited left word for him to come out with all speed to Black Hawk.

When Griddles arose from his couch in a certain place in Denver the following morning, he called at



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one of his haunts for a bracer, when the habitues of the place informed him that the people at the tunnel were just crazy for him to go out there at once, as the work had been stopped, an injunction having been served on them. In his hasty progress to the depot he called in another place where they sold liquid refreshments, and was again informed that his presence was urgently needed at Black Hawk.

Great was Griddles' surprise when he finally arrived at Black Hawk to see the small army of miners sitting in squads, smoking and discussing the shut-down of the work. After holding a meeting for a few minutes with Sanders, Jack and Rake, in one of the dug-outs, Griddles emerged, and walking to the marshal and his deputies, said:

"Hello, Ben! Hello, Hank! What's all the trouble about?"

"We've got an injunction against your people," said the marshal.

Taking Sanders to one side, Griddles told him to leave everything to him. Going back to the minions of the law who were waiting for him, Griddles in a short time came back to Sanders, and together they went to one of the dug-outs.

"Sanders, this looks harmless enough, this little piece of paper, but if your account is good and the denominations of the figures are of the right size, it will accomplish anything this side of the grave. Now, Sanders, as soon as the train pulls out for Denver, which will be in an hour, start right up and go ahead; I'm going to fix this so there'll be no further trouble, and we'll be through their drift in a day or two."



Sanders simply stared at Griddles—he surely was the king of Fixers.

Griddles finished removing the dust from his lungs that day in Denver with the “boys,” and was at the tunnel bright and early the following morning, eager and keen to push the work along; although at times he might be seen making sundry visits to a bottle he had secreted in one of the dug-outs—just to taper off.

At the end of the first month two hundred feet of the tunnel had been cut. Sanders was pleased at the result. The drills had never stopped night or day except the time when Griddles was on his vacation. Under Griddles’ perfect systematic superintendency three hundred feet of the tunnel was cut in the second month, making five hundred feet. Then the enormous expense of the undertaking, with the thousand and one unforeseen difficulties with which the nervy Sanders had to contend, brought him to that state which the scoffers had prophesied—with all his wealth he had come to the end of his rope. His London bankers had called a halt. They did not tell him point blank that they would not honor any more of his paper, but—well, they wanted to see him. He had better take a trip back to England. Perhaps some of our readers have been in a similar boat; it happens at times to most of us except those that were born with the proverbial “silver spoon in their mouths” and have had good luck for the remainder of their lives.

The head of some vast undertaking may suddenly die, but there are always others to step into his shoes and take his place. An explosion may occur in any of these tunnels, killing a number of men, but the work

is resumed. Nothing will stop any of these undertakings but the one thing which is supreme on this planet—Gold; yes, King Gold.

What did the nights of feverish anxiety amount to? These Lombard street kings had called a halt.

In a dug-out, sitting on boxes with their feet on a bench, were to be seen Griddles, Rake, Jack and Sanders; and as they smoked their pipe they discussed the outlook.

The stockholders of the Jack-Pot mine had either sold or given away what stock they held, as they would not pay the assessments which this tunnel entailed; they had never been to Black Hawk to see how it was progressing, but they took the reports they heard for granted, which were that a party of Englishmen were sinking more money in the tunnel than they would ever get out of the mine if they were successful in freeing it from water, which, to say the least, was very problematical. When they heard or received notice of further assessments on the stock, it could then be procured, if anybody wanted it, for the asking.

The four men, of whom Griddles seemed to be the ruling spirit, sat and discussed the situation all the forenoon. It was then decided that Sanders should buy all the stock that he could get hold of and take it to England to sell to his rich friends. There was no doubt, Griddles said, of the ultimate result of the undertaking. The mine had been acknowledged in its palmy days to be one of the best in the States; and was at the present time by no means played out. That fact had been assured in a very emphatic manner from every source of information, and Griddles was

confident that they would all be millionaires before they were through with the undertaking.

The convincing language of Griddles was such a picture of untold wealth which the mine contained, as to remove, for the time being at least, all doubt of the ultimate result in the minds of the Englishmen.

"You say, Sanders, that you have money enough in the Denver bank to pay the men their next month's pay?"

"Just about, Griddles."

"Then you better pack off and buy up all the stock. I suppose you can borrow enough for that?"

"Yes; I'll cable for the amount required, as I suppose they'll want spot cash for it."

"Look here, Sanders, if you go the right way about it, you can get a bushel basket of the stock for almost nothing; and if you don't, and they get onto the fact that there is a demand for it, it will jump to par in twenty-four hours. I'll give you a letter to a friend of mine in New York, and you had better stay there until he corrals all there is of it. As soon as you arrive in Liverpool, you had better see this fellow Robinson, and find out from him what stock there is in the banks that you can get hold of. One thing, Sanders,—and on your life don't forget it,—this whole shooting-match is a blank failure, you understand, until you get your paws on all the outstanding stock, and then—up she goes—and there's millions in it for those that have money to invest."

"I'll follow your advice, Griddles, to the letter," replied Sanders.

Griddles' friend in New York procured all the Jack-Pot stock there was to be unearthed, and with it se-



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curely packed in his trunk, Sanders boarded the *Lucania* for Liverpool.

It was an anxious time for Rake and Jack during Sanders' absence in England. All their hopes now depended upon whether Sanders could interest his friends in the undertaking; if not, what then? The thought of failure was maddening to both of them, possibly more so to Jack as he thought of Mrs. Robinson, who was never out of his mind, knowing that she would stop at nothing in her efforts to hoodwink Ruth into marrying Rushton.

He would not reveal his existence until he knew what his prospects were, and was determined to make the sacrifice of his life sooner than bring down this noble girl to a life of genteel poverty by marrying him. To divert his mind as much as possible he worked night and day until Griddles called a halt. Possibly, only for Griddles, he would not have been able to bear up so well. To Griddles, failure was out of the question. He had innumerable stories—all of them may not have been gospel truth, but they answered the purpose—describing instances where he had pulled things out of the fire which had been (so he said), in a darned sight worse shape than this mine.

Sanders had been gone a month, and the time for the second pay roll since he went was now approaching with no money in the bank to pay the men.



CHAPTER XC.

WHEN Dick Sanders arrived in Liverpool, he called at Robinson's office, and with his aid procured for almost nothing, all of the stock of the Jack-Pot mine that was for sale. He had followed Grid-dles' instructions to the letter, telling Robinson he was afraid all the money he had put into the mine was lost; but before leaving Liverpool, and after he had all of the stock, urged him to keep a stiff upper lip, that things might come out all right in the end. He then proceeded to London and there picked up more of the stock before he made a move in the matter of calling on his rich, influential friends.

When Sanders was ready to lay before his countrymen, his scheme of raising enough money to complete the tunnel, he called a meeting of them at a barrister's office who was acting for him in the matter. The stock having been placed in one of the banks, everything was ready for the meeting. The barrister opened the meeting and spoke in glowing terms of the undertaking. Then the maps of the tunnel were passed around; also the record of the earning capacity of the mine previous to it flooding. They were then told that any further details would be furnished by Sanders.

Sanders here dwelt on all they had done and the amount of money he had sunk in the undertaking; but the cold indifference which was depicted on the countenances of this crowd of phlegmatic Englishmen awakened in Sanders a disgust that he could not very

well hide. He realized for the first time the many things that had been said about his countrymen; they indeed were a cold-blooded race, and for icy chilliness were not to be equaled.

The barrister, knowing that half of the people that had promised to be there had not arrived, moved an adjournment of the meeting for two weeks, telling the members to be sure and come, as this was a chance of a lifetime to get in on the ground floor of a good thing.

"A frost, yes; the biggest kind of a frost," replied the barrister.

"Damn them, Tobin, I was mad enough to lick some of them at the questions they asked," said Sanders.

"It's no use getting angry, Sanders. Why the devil didn't you bring that fellow along that you have taken in with you—Riddles, Biddles, Giddles—what's his name?" asked Tobin.

"By gad, you're right there, Tobin; that's what I ought to have done, he'd have fixed them. Damn it, he can fix anything. He'd have had their eyes bulging out and they'd have been jumping over one another to buy the stock if he'd have had the handling of this affair."

"By Jove, Sanders, if I were you I'd send for him at once, and I'll mail a circular after I get them ready, stating that the celebrated American mining engineer, Griddles, who is at present in charge of the Jack-Pot tunnel, will attend the meeting. Don't delay, Sanders, but send for that American at once; they can handle our countrymen to the Queen's taste."



CHAPTER XCI.

"IT certainly looks bad, Griddles, old chap," said Jack in a manner of forced cheerfulness. No word from Dick. I'm afraid they'll have nothing to do with it on the other side. What are you going to tell the men? Here's the fourteenth of the month and you promised them their wages on the sixteenth. How are you going to get out of paying them?"

"We've got two days yet, my boy; time enough then to think about that part of the business. I'm afraid Sanders has not put the thing in the right manner to those countrymen of yours; they've got to be roused up a little; they are all right and stickers when you get them going, but you've got to get them moving first. You see, Jack, you can't catch any flies with vinegar; even your best friends require a little sweetening, and unless they think they can make a hundred dollars for every one they invest—why, they'd never come into the camp."

"Sanders would not lie to them for all the money there is in the mine; and he would never have gone into this only to help me out of a hole. I'm greatly worried at this suspense. If we don't hear from him by the sixteenth, better shut down. I'm not going to have these poor fellows work if there is no money coming to pay them. No, sir; we'll shut down, Griddles."

"Now, Jack, I know you're the soul of honor; but you just leave this to me. This tunnel has got to be

finished, and Griddles is going to see it through. I wouldn't intentionally beat a man out of a dollar; but I'm not going to see such a straight up and down set of fellows as you three young men are, go to the wall. Understand, Jack, this tunnel has got to be put through. If our brave Sanders can't raise the wind, then, my boy, old Grid will put his shoulder to the wheel; but not until we hear from Sanders will a pick or a steam drill stop working. I'm going to put some more new men to work to-morrow."

"You don't mean it, surely, Griddles?"

"You can just bet I mean it. It will stiffen the backs of some of those fellows that are inclined to quit if they don't get their money on the sixteenth."

On the night of the fifteenth Jack got a cable from Sanders to draw on him at the bank in Denver for what money he required to keep the work going, with cipher word of letter mailed.

Once more our two friends slept easy, with hopes that everything would end in Sanders' getting the necessary capital.

Three days after the cable, there was another one received addressed to Griddles, which, when ciphered out, read, "*Come to London immediately.*"

Griddles was as pleased as a school boy, for with all his ups and downs, he had never been in England. Scores of times he had promised himself the pleasure of such a trip, but something always occurred that stopped him going.

"I think Sanders wants you over there to fix things, Griddles," said Jack.

"I've fixed a few things in my time, boys, and as I've told you, this cut has got to be finished. Now look here; I don't suppose you will do what I ask you,



either of you young fellows; but don't contradict any reports that you may hear that Griddles has said. You understand, I've been sent for by the English syndicate that has taken hold of this tunnel. If you are asked any questions that go against your conscience, just tell them if Griddles said so it must be so."

"Don't stay over there too long, Griddles; remember there is no one here to fix things while you are away."

What Griddles told the people in Black Hawk is a little out of our line of information; but it is safe to say that it gave an impetus to the undertaking which was almost as good as capital; and when he called at the various places in Denver, showing the cable dispatch and other letters which he said he had, as he tapped his breast pocket, helped to boom the undertaking. Griddles was paving the way for help in future emergencies which might be needed.

As his partners bade him good-bye the big-hearted fellow was deeply touched at the honest fervor of these young men.

"By thunder, but those young fellows are as straight as a string; and Griddles, you've got to see them through with this undertaking, and you'll do it or your name's not Griddles," murmured that worthy, sitting back in the car after waving his hand as the train steamed out of the depot.



CHAPTER XCII.

WHEN Griddles arrived in London he had an interview with Tobin, the barrister; and after a little jaunt around the city with Sanders, it was arranged that Tobin and Griddles were to prepare the prospectus which was to be laid before the prospective stockholders.

This arrangement just suited Sanders, as he detested details which had to be gotten up for the benefit of proving to the skeptical that the investment was good. This was his first business venture; and whether they put their money into the undertaking or not, he could not, nor would he try to toady to them. Griddles and Tobin knew this and wanted him anywhere else but in the office until the night of the meeting.

"I guess we understand each other, Tobin, as to the business on hand," said Griddles.

"I think the matter's quite plain, Mr. Griddles," replied Tobin.

"Now, Tobin, we've got to see the boys through in this deal; and before we get down to business we might as well understand each other—and you'll oblige me by leaving off all the frills that you seem to have over here. My name is Griddles—Bill Griddles. You can address me in any manner you like when you've company, but when we're alone make it plain Bill, or Grid. That's all I get in Denver."

"You Americans are rum chaps, but I'll try and comply with your request, Mr. Griddles—Griddles—Bill."

"You'll get there in a little while, Tobin. You see, when we get a little chummy we understand each other better—loosen up kinder; and it makes the sailing so much pleasanter. I won't hurt your dignity any, Tobin, and I'll put the handle to your name when any one's around; but between ourselves, it's Tobin and Grid."

While Griddles was taking from his valise all the papers containing his memorandum of details of the tunnel, with a history of the Jack-Pot mine, Tobin was pacing the floor fuming with rage. His dignity had been lowered to such an alarming extent that for the moment he thought of pitching the whole affair to the winds—and Griddles with it—if he was strong enough.

Who was this damned American to come and talk to him like this—yes, he—Tobin, the barrister, whose plans were laid, and some of the wires already pulled whereby he was to have a title, and to think that this rough mining fellow had come into his chambers—in his shirt sleeves—and five minutes after an introduction, lowered him to his own level. The work of years had been assailed, and the pillar of frigidness in the guise of Tobin, laughed at.

If Tobin's dignity had been lowered, his pocketbook had not; and titles with a large estate cost money to keep up. Sanders had placed this matter in his hands. He would smother his feelings; this American would not remain long in England. He was trying to suppress his wounded vanity when Griddles exclaimed:

"Now, Tobin, my boy, if you'll just take a seat we'll discuss the prospectus in detail. I guess you'll find everything pertaining to the mine and the tunnel



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in this bunch of stuff. Sanders told me to leave everything to you, and if after you've waded through what I've given you, you want any further details—fire away, and I'll answer all the questions you want to ask."

Lighting a cigar, Griddles sat back in his chair with his feet resting on the window-sill.

If Barrister Tobin had thought well of the undertaking before he met Griddles, what did he think of it now? Griddles, as he sat back in his chair puffing rings of smoke from a strong Havana, seemed in a kind of hazy dream as he watched the rings of smoke gradually ascend towards the ceiling. Any person closely watching him, however, could have discerned a merry twinkle in his eyes as he half opened and closed them, casting, at the same time, a sly glance at Tobin, who was nervously reading over the memoranda of particulars. He had watched Tobin gradually growing more nervous, and at last saw this dignified pillar of the English law jump from his seat, saying:

"My dear Griddles, Sanders never told me that you had been the engineer in charge of the mine during its running by the first Jack-Pot mining company."

The prospectus that Griddles had drafted enlarged upon the great advantages of the tunnel, and the enormous expense they would save in ice and forced air, that this item alone had cost the old company when he was superintendent of the mine, a half million dollars a year. They would save that; and when this tunnel was complete would save another million dollars by running the waste rock through the tunnel instead of having to hoist it as in former years. In a word, it was the most carefully gotten up and glowing account

of a mine that had been considered one of the best in the States, backed by the authority of one of the most reliable mining engineers in America. All this, with the knowledge that one of their own aristocrats was at the head of it, and wanted them, if they could not go themselves, to send a committee to investigate how they had progressed with the tunnel. Tobin, who had made a good bargain with Sanders, and could take his fee either in stock or money, dropped in an instant all that cold frigidity on which a certain class of the English seem to have a monopoly.

Griddles had won him over. Here was a man interested in an enterprise where there were millions at stake who carelessly puffed away at his cigar as if such an enterprise with him was an everyday affair.

"Griddles, old chap, come, come let us dine," said Tobin.

"There, by thunder, you're getting there, Tobin; you'll thaw out in a short time if old Grid stays with you long enough. Damn it, Tobin—what's the use of such coldness between men? We ought to be as warm as we can to each other; I guess we'll be cold long enough some day."

Tobin had procured all the details, such as memoranda, and in fact everything past and present pertaining to the history of the Jack-Pot mine; also cuts, diagrams, and maps of the tunnel, which only a Griddles in his own inimitable way could provide for the stockholders. This with the amount that Sanders had invested in the tunnel would no doubt make as interesting and inviting a prospectus as a party of capitalists would wish to consider.



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"Now, Griddles, old chap," Griddles smiled. "He's getting there," he murmured. "It will take the stenographer a day to lick this matter into shape, and if you wish to take a look around the city until to-morrow at this time you are at liberty to do so. I'll then have the papers ready to submit for your approval; then if they suit you we'll get as many as required printed."

"That sounds like business, Tobin. I guess I'll find enough in this little village of yours to interest me for a day, and you can bank on my being here to-morrow at this very hour."

"Little village! Rum chaps, these Americans; they bring down everything to their own level in one wild swoop," murmured Tobin, as Griddles, having closed the door as he departed, turned abruptly and opening it again, called in a loud manner:

"At ten to-morrow, Tobe, sure."

Tobin stared,—this abbreviation of his name was the limit. He hummed, hawed, coughed, then wiped his glasses, walked around the room and wondered, and was still wondering how it was that this American could bring him down to his own rough-shod ways in twenty-four hours after an introduction. He felt like a school boy who had been whipped.

While the barrister is preparing the bait for the prospective stockholders, Griddles is seeing the sights of the metropolis after his own fashion.



CHAPTER XCIII.

SIR ARCHIBALD FAIRBROTHER'S daughter, Lorice, who had somewhat trifled with Richard Sanders, never supposed when he departed she would feel the poignant grief she did. The gay but passionate Dick Sanders had scarcely arrived in the States before the fair Lorice began to pine for him. But Sanders was highly sensitive, and his wounded pride was such that with the torture he was enduring on account of her not giving him the answer he so much longed for when about to depart for the States, combined with the fact that she seemed to take a delight in making life miserable for him, nerved him to that extent that he had not written to her, nor she to him. The lovers' tilt, on parting, had resulted in a very formal good-bye on both sides; but we may rest assured that our friend Dick was not many hours in London before he made his way to the paternal home of the fair Lorice.

The reconciliation of lovers is always so pleasant that we might suppose some subtle power arranged it. Our worthy friend never appeared in the eyes of the fair Lorice such a handsome, manly fellow as he did on his return from the States.

During Dick Sanders' absence in America the fair Lorice had plenty of time for reflection, and at the innumerable functions she attended, Dick Sanders was ever the subject of conversation among her many admirers. They had a twofold reason in bringing our



friend's name into the conversation with her. They wanted to know how Sanders stood in her affections, and if the semi-engagement was off, and generally began to praise our friend Dick as being a manly fellow in going away and giving up all amusement and roughing it in the wild and woolly West—which was all true, but said for the purpose of drawing out the fair Lorice as to how the Sanders-Fairbrother alliance was progressing—or whether it was at an end. When man attempts to cross swords with a woman in an affray of this kind he is woefully handicapped; so with Lorice, she parrying every thrust with ease and gracefulness.

The meeting of the lovers ended in a compact that after the huge undertaking which Sanders had on hand was finished, the wedding should take place.

The next morning Sanders came bounding into the chambers of Tobin with an exuberance of spirits that was contagious.

"Good morning, Tobin! Hello, Grid! How's the prospectus? Got it cut and dried? Everything lovely and the goose hanging high?"

"Well, I don't know how the gentlemen will look at it, but Mr. Tobin and I have licked it into pretty decent shape, and I'm not afraid with a prospectus like that to go before the most exacting and critical experts in Great Britain. It looks to me quite tempting, and I think the gentlemen when they have read it will line up strong and get into our band wagon," replied Griddles, as he replaced his cigar in his mouth, swung his chair around, where, with feet on windowsill, he puffed away in the most contented manner.

"Griddles, I believe you could draw the money out of their pockets without any prospectus, eh, Tobin?"



Tobin hummed and hawed, then coughed slightly, as with a flourish he drew his handkerchief, wiped his monacle, readjusted the same, and in a lordly manner, said, he believed it to be a good, sound investment; upon his word it was.



CHAPTER XCIV.

THE meeting of the prospective stockholders, with those who already held the stock, was to take place at the chambers of Barrister Tobin.

The prospectus mailed to parties supposed to be interested in the enterprise was without a doubt the best affair of its kind that ever left the printer's hands. Griddles had stretched his imagination just far enough without going to extremes. When Sanders read one of the finished articles that was to be read at the meeting, describing Griddles as having been chief engineer for the first Jack-Pot mining company, and holding that position at the time of the flooding of the mine, he was thunderstruck.

"Here—I say, Griddles, what the devil does this mean?"

"What are you alluding to, Dick, my boy?" replied Griddles with a roguish smile.

"Alluding to? Why, damn it, man—what's this you've got here about yourself having charge of the Jack-Pot mine under the old administration of the same? By gad! Nothing must appear in print nor be said that will not bear the strictest investigation."

Tobin hummed and hawed and blustered around in a nervous manner. While he wanted to be the soul of honor in the presence of Sanders, he did not care a rap whether Griddles had ever seen the mine or not. He was inclined to believe all and everything that Griddles said, and approve of everything he did, pro-

viding he could have his skirts cleared if there ever came an investigation.

Sanders fussed, fumed and tore 'round in general about deceiving people, and he'd "be damned if he'd stand for it."

"When you've simmered down a little, Dick, we'll go ahead with the business we have on hand. There—there—that's a good fellow," as Sanders bit the end of a cigar.

"Now, Dick, I'd like to know," continued the imperturbable Griddles, "what's objectionable to you in the prospectus?"

"Just what I've said, Griddles. Suppose I allowed you to appear to my friends in the light of a man that had been engineer-in-chief of the mine, and they should find out it's false, I'd be a ruined man—no, no, Griddles, it won't do. I appreciate your fervor on my behalf, but we must have everything wide open."

"Suppose some of the parties that attend the meeting should ask me if I ever had charge of the first Jack-Pot mining company. What would you have me say to them?" queried Griddles.

"Tell them the truth—say no."

"If I told them no, that wouldn't be the truth; that would be a lie," replied Griddles.

"Damn it, Griddles, didn't you tell me that you had never worked for the Jack-Pot mining company when I first engaged you?"

"I certainly did, as I did not wish to get mixed up with that gang of sharks that had hold of it; but if you'll remember, and if Rake and Jack were here they could prove it, that afterward I told you I had had charge of the mine for two years for the old company.



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How do you think I could enumerate all the different cross-cuts and rooms? Bring me that map here. Do you see that section there? Now that's the place where Red Mike was killed through an explosion of dynamite. This room here," said Griddles, pointing to another section of the map, "is where your humble servant came near cashing in through a falling of the roof. Do you want any more proof? I was under the impression that you knew all along that I had had charge of the mine."

"It's all a dream to me, Griddles. I understood from what you told me that you had been down in the mine many times as consulting engineer, but this is the first I ever heard of you having charge of it."

"I was mighty careful not to mention any one, except those that knew it, as the last company were such a band of dead beats I was tired of explaining to those who knew I had worked for the original company that I had had nothing to do with the last one that swindled the public. However, if you want me to leave that out of the prospectus, say the word and we'll get new ones printed; but we'll be in as bad a fix then, as no doubt some of the people will ask if I ever worked in the mine, and I'm not going to lie and say I didn't."

"Gentlemen, I think this is a tempest in a tea-pot. It's very evident, my dear Sanders, that Mr. Griddles is right in this matter and did not wish to jeopardize his reputation by telling everybody that came along that he had worked in the Jack-Pot mine, on account of the unsavory reputation it had obtained. I don't blame Mr. Griddles in the least, Sanders," continued the diplomatic barrister.

"Well, you ought to know, Griddles," replied Sanders as he prepared to leave.

"Now, gentlemen, the meeting takes place to-morrow at ten o'clock," said the barrister as he commenced to take up his memoranda of particulars.

When Sanders had departed, Tobin, now that it had been decided to allow the prospectus to stand with Griddles as former engineer of the mine—thought he would impress Griddles with his own honesty, and commenced by saying:

"If I thought, Griddles, this wasn't a perfectly honest undertaking, I'd wash my hands of the whole affair."

Griddles, who was a keen observer of human nature, read the barrister so thoroughly that he could not restrain himself, and laughed boisterously as he replied:

"Excuse me, Tobin, but allow me to look at your right hand—no, it's not there."

"Good gracious, Mr. Griddles! What does all this mean?"

"Well, when I was about ten years old my father told me to always deal with honest people, and I asked him how I was to tell whether they were honest or not. His reply was that I should always look at the palm of their right hand, and if I there saw a tuft of hair growing, I could rest assured they were honest. I've been looking for that tuft of hair, Tobin, for forty years—and I've seen a few palms."

Tobin was very nervous.

"'Pon my word, Mr. Griddles, you astound me—never heard of such a test of a man's honesty."

"When in doubt, Tobin, look at their palms."



CHAPTER XCV.

THE meeting for the sale of the stock of the Jack-Pot mine is about to take place.

After the prospectus had been thoroughly gone into by those present, and all suggestions pertaining to the same had been answered by Sanders, some one suggested that they hear from the American engineer, Griddles, as to what he thought of the future of the mine.

Griddles was in his element, and was greatly elated to be the cynosure of this august assembly. With cold phlegmaticism these frigid Britishers plied him with questions right and left, all of which he answered with perfect sangfroid; and when he asked if any other gentlemen present would like to know anything more about the mine or the tunnel, there was a noticeable readjustment of monocles as they stared at him, and declared him to be "a droll fellow, rather, by Jove."

The remainder of the stock was subscribed for, with the stipulation by the purchasers that the sale should not be considered consummated until Roberts, the mining engineer, had reported on the possible cost of finishing the tunnel. If in his opinion it could be finished for the figure quoted by Griddles and Sanders, they would buy the stock. Just as the meeting was about to close, a telegram was read from the Earl of Dartmoor, stating that he was sorry not to be present, and begged to be allowed to subscribe for a hundred shares of the mining and tunnel stock.

The barrister, Tobin, then arose and addressed the meeting, stating that the Jack-Pot mining company would not bind itself to hold stock until Mr. Roberts had made his report, as they had been besieged for stock by a great many people, but would guarantee to take back the stock, at the price now paid, from those who wanted to sell after the report of Mr. Roberts arrived. He did not think any fairer proposition could be asked. This changed the aspect of affairs, and Griddles being once more interrogated, the sale of the stock commenced.

The Saturday following the sale of the stock saw Sanders, Griddles, and the mining engineer who was going out to report on the tunnel in the interest of the new stockholders, on the Cunarder "Etruria," bound for New York. Arriving there, they immediately took the train for Denver. Staying at the Albany to rest for the night, they took the local the following morning for Black Hawk.

Griddles, knowing that Roberts most likely would, in conversation, say something about the past and future of the mine, and knowing how truthful Jack and Rake were, thought it advisable to post them to the fact that he had been engineer-in-chief for the original Jack-Pot mining company. He never in his life had to work so hard to make people allow him to do them a service. They both stared when Griddles repeated to them the time he had in making Sanders understand that he had had charge of the mine for the old Jack-Pot Mining Co.; they were in the same boat as Sanders, but kept their ideas to themselves. As the reader may judge, Griddles had never seen the inside of the Jack-Pot mine; but, as he had stated, he was



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going to see the boys through—and wanted no splitting of hairs. We must give Griddles credit for one thing; he knew that the reputation of the mine previous to its flooding was of the best, and he firmly believed that everybody who invested in the mine would win out by a big margin.

Roberts, the mining engineer, was left entirely in the hands of Griddles, as Sanders would have nothing to do with any assertion the man might make when he got back to England, where his name could be brought in as having influenced him in any way.

Griddles took the greatest care of Mr. Roberts. He never wounded his vanity or went directly against his opinion or knowledge in estimating the cost of this and the cost of that; but would always drop in a subtle something to bring it to the way that he (Griddles) wanted, without hurting the feelings of Mr. Roberts. The result of Mr. Roberts' trip was not only satisfactory to all concerned, but he thought that the tunnel could be finished well under the amount estimated at the stockholders' meeting.

King Gold had once more brushed aside all obstacles. There was enough money subscribed and assured to finish the undertaking.

The renewed life and vigor in and around the tunnel works was contagious. The four partners worked more like machines than human beings. The heat as the tunnel progressed was almost unbearable. Lamps burned dimly. Workmen fainted at their posts. The mules refused to enter the tunnel; and after they had been dragged in by force, resisted being driven away from the air shafts. The three Englishmen, with Griddles as the main pilot in the undertaking, worked shift and shift about; Sanders and Jack working con-

tinuous shifts until they were brought down so low that Griddles called a halt after seeing them on more than one occasion brought to the surface fainting. Even Griddles, veteran that he was, several times was on the verge of collapse.

Griddles had not only to keep his eye on all of the undertaking, but also on his partners, of whom he thought the world, that they did not overwork themselves. Three hours of this intense heat, choked as they were with the dust which coagulated on their sweating bodies, was as much as the hardiest of the young men that Griddles had picked to finish the tunnel could stand; but steam drill and pick-axe never ceased, until Griddles called Sanders' attention, saying:

"She's beginning to leak, Dick, and we've got to be mighty careful."

After a painstaking survey, Sanders and Griddles decided that after another day's work a good charge of dynamite should force through the partition that separated the mine from the tunnel.

For twenty-four hours the partners never left the tunnel, time and again staggering as they were assisted to the air-shafts to be revived; then back to the choking dust and heat. The intense strain and the unusual work had brought all the partners except Griddles to little more than skin and bones; and now with their eyes sunk low in their sockets, their faces coagulated with grime, their vitality reduced to a low ebb, they dragged themselves around very different from their former elastic step. Griddles at last acknowledged that it was getting kind of strenuous.

Everything was now ready for the great charge of dynamite which was to force through the partition.



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The tunnel was cleared of all debris, and the last men out were the partners. Sanders, Rakeman and Jack were lying in their dug-outs—all in—while Griddles was carefully watching the final details before the signal was given to fire the dynamite.

The following day, Griddles, assisted by one of his favorite workmen, placed in the last charge of dynamite; everything being ready, the signal was given.

The explosion that followed let loose the huge body of water that filled the mine, and as it came thundering along the noise was deafening until it spent itself in the waters of Clear Creek. Its force, while it lasted, was irresistible.

There is joy among our friends; no matter what may be the outcome of the mine, the tunnel is a success.

"Well, Sanders, I guess we've knocked the bottom out of the old girl; she'll be good and dry when this water has had time to drain itself; my, but there was some force behind it when it first struck the creek—nothing so powerful as water, Sanders," remarked Griddles.

"No, nor so consistent nor conservative; for it will not rise above its own level unless you force it," replied Sanders.

"What do you think of this countryman of yours, boys, shooting the sarcasm into me like that?" laughingly replied Griddles.



CHAPTER XCVI.

THE ceaseless whizzing of the cable night and day as it hauled the ore to the mouth of the mine, from which it was then started on its way to the grizzlies set in the bottom of the chutes, and from there to the amalgamating room, then to the retort house, and finally to the smelting room, gave a visitor to the now famous Jack-Pot mine an idea of the soundness of the institution. There was no more secrecy about the running of the mine. If a reporter called he was told to go down and see for himself.

The tunnel was, according to experts, so valuable in connection with running the mine that they could hardly figure, until the mine had been in operation for a year, what it would save. They could now dispense with ice. There was no more pumping to keep the mine free from water. The enormous expense in forcing air down to the miners could also be dispensed with. The waste rock was now run through the tunnel, with the possibility in the future of erecting the various shops at the entrance to the tunnel, thus saving the expense of hauling ore to the surface. The stock of the company was now held firmly to await results from the output of the mine.

The money that had been expended in the tunnel was something enormous and they would have to strike some very rich ore to repay them for this tremendous outlay.

"Which of these drifts was the best paying, Grid-



dles, when you had charge of the mine?" queried Sanders.

"They were pretty near alike; they were all good until they petered out," answered Griddles,—and to himself—"Why the devil can't he let that drop? Damn it, he must know I never saw the inside of the mine before—but I guess he wants to have a little fun with me. It's no use saying anything until we're in clover; when we strike it rich, everything goes."

While the mine was being worked in the best and most economical manner, it barely paid expenses. Griddles, who was supposed to have the finest nose for ore of any mining engineer in the States, could not with the aid of that olfactory organ unearth any great vein; but he kept the blood of his companions up to the boiling point with his stories of fabulous veins he had discovered. These stories certainly, if they did no good, did no harm.


One day a man called at the mine, asking to see the head boss. He had some business, so he said, that he would not divulge to anyone else.

"Is your business in reference to this mine?" asked Sanders.

"It is," said the man, who had the appearance through liquor of being a physical wreck, "but I'm not going to say another word unless you have some quiet place where no one will see us, as I would not be caught around here for all the ore you'll ever take out of the mine."

"Come in here," said Sanders, "and I'll guarantee you'll be perfectly safe." It was very evident the man was afraid of being recognized.

"I've heard, sir, that you are a good sort of a fellow



and liable to do the right thing when you have given your word; and while watching and waiting to see how your tunnel scheme came out, I've admired your pluck."

"You didn't come here to tell me that, did you?" queried Sanders.

"Not by a darned sight, sir. See here, boss; when that mine was running I had charge of one of the levels—don't mistake me, now—this was when she was run right; I'm not alluding to that gang of sharks that had hold of her, but the time she flooded. Well, when I had charge of the level, I stood in with some mining brokers, and whenever we struck a rich vein of ore (and the richest ore that ever saw the light of day has been taken out of that mine), I was paid a good price for the information. The men working under me stood in on the deal, and when we unearthed a rich vein it was kept quiet until I got my price from the broker. Well, sir, we unearthed the prettiest and richest vein you ever clapped eyes on the day the charge of dynamite was let off that flooded the mine. We had just enough time to escape with our lives. Now, sir, I'm not asking a fortune, but if you have not unearthed this vein, I can guide you to it, and all that I ask is for you to stake me to what you think is right."

"What do you want me to do in the matter?" asked Sanders.

"Take me down the mine and I'll show you the vein."

"On one condition; if you'll allow one of my partners to talk with you, I'll give you the opportunity you want."

"Will you guarantee that he'll not peach on me? There are certain persons very anxious to make my

acquaintance, and I'm just as anxious they should not," replied the man.

At this Sanders smiled; he could not for the life of him see why anybody should be anxious to make the acquaintance of such a woe-begone looking creature, although he guessed it was the authorities that the man feared.

"You've got my word that you are as safe with him as you are with me."

Sending for Griddles, when that worthy appeared Sanders unfolded to him the tale of the man. Griddles sized him up with a merry twinkle in his eye; it certainly was a fair proposition, and he advised Sanders to go ahead with the business.

The three men descended the mine, and upon arriving at the level designated by the man as the one where the rich vein was, they alighted. It was very evident that the man had worked in the mine, and for a considerable period, as he was familiar with every level they passed. When they had arrived at one of the cross-cuts in the most remote part of the mine, he led the way.

"This stuff has coated the walls and covered up all traces of color," said the man, referring to the sediment that had adhered to the walls during the time it was flooded. Gazing around as if to get his exact bearings, he at last said:

"There's your vein, sir; get your men to work this cut to-morrow and I'll warrant you'll take out some of the richest ore you ever saw in your life."

The man seemed annoyed at the stoical indifference of Sanders.

"Get me a pick, boss, and I'll soon show you the right color."



The seam was there and both Griddles and Sanders were satisfied.

The vein that the man had shown to Sanders proved to be all that he had prophesied, and more.

Griddles took a gang of men and for the next forty-eight hours scarcely left the spot. Under his supervision the drift was extended and as the work proceeded it showed the walls to be lined with the richest of black sulphurets. As the drift extended it grew richer and richer, until Griddles figured that there could not be less than fifty to seventy-five million dollars' worth of ore in sight. There seemed no limit, and no indications of the vein petering out. It was a sight never to be forgotten; they had opened up nature's treasure vault, which men's eyes had never gazed on before. In estimating the assay of the ore, Griddles put it down as anywhere from five to seven hundred dollars per ton. The great tension that our friends had been under so long was at last relaxed, and this enormous and sudden acquisition of wealth was no dream, but a reality.

Griddles was at once for keeping this discovery quiet, and corraling more of the outstanding stock; but Sanders, backed by Jack and Rake, would not listen to any such proposition.

"We'll all have more money than we can use, and I want those who put their money into this to reap some of the harvest." said Sanders.

"I don't know, Sanders, but what you're right, but it seems kind of natural to look out for number one; but in this case I guess there'll be enough to go around."

It was only after the best experts in the States had given their opinion of the value of the ore in sight, that



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Rake and (here our friend resumes his former title) Captain Hardesty would accede to the wishes of Sanders, after which they had a little private conversation, the result of which was a letter sent to Miss Ruth Robinson. In this letter Rake told her that he had news of the Captain; that he was alive, but had been sick and a prisoner for a long time, and but that he did not wish to cause her too great a shock he would give her the particulars; for her to try and compose herself at receiving this news, and to answer at once and he would send all details. No mention was made in this letter of the Jack-Pot mine, which news was to be a surprise.

The letter that Rake sent to Ruth Mrs. Robinson received, and as she had no scruples in doing anything that would aid and abet her in the object she had on hand, she proceeded to open it. If the contents did not interfere with any of her plans, she would seal it up again and hand it to Ruth.

Going to her room she lighted an alcohol lamp and placed over it a small tea-kettle. When the steam emerged from the spout she held the envelope over it. If she expected a surprise, she certainly received it.

"My God! He's alive! This wedding must take place at once. I don't want any half-pay officer making a pauper of my daughter."

The newspapers had published the fact that the Jack-Pot mine, now operated by an English syndicate, was in a fair way to become one of the greatest bonanzas in the history of celebrated mines.

Everybody smiled, laughed and guffawed. "Old Jack-Pot is beginning his tricks again," they said in speaking of Robinson. Robinson made the rounds of the business community with his pockets bulging out



with newspapers, showing where mention was made of the wonderful strike of ore in the Jack-Pot mine. These wise people put Robinson down as being childish. Did he think he could interest them in such a swindle? They never stopped to think that he did not ask them to invest in the mine, as they brushed him to one side, invariably exclaiming:

“Wonderful! Wonderful! I’m in a hurry, Robinson; good-day,” leaving our old friend in a very crushed condition. Mrs. Robinson would not listen to anything her husband told her about the mine; she had other fish to fry. The brewery stock at the present time had absorbed all her capital; and as it seemed a reliable and safe investment, she was going too allow it to stay where it was. Now that the truth about the Jack-Pot mine was being told in such a candid manner, without any braying of trumpets, no one believed it.



CHAPTER XCVII.

CAPTAIN HARDESTY and Rake experienced intense joy as they sent the glad tidings across the ocean, breaking the news of the supposed dead coming back to life. Both the families would now forever be placed beyond pecuniary embarrassment. All this joy, however, received a great set-back. It was long past all reasonable time for an answer to Rake's letter, and the spirits of Captain Hardesty drooped accordingly. What had all this struggle been for? Possibly at this moment she was married to Rushton. He did not blame her. She had been, most likely, almost harassed to death, and to save her family, and through the machinations of that heartless woman, her mother, she had sacrificed herself.

Sanders insisted that Rake take the first steamer to England and cable as soon as he arrived whether the wedding had, as Dick described it, "come off."

That night Rake wrote another letter to Ruth, telling her that he was coming home at once; incidentally mentioning the fact that another party might have come with him, but not receiving an answer to his letter, they were both afraid something had happened, and if such was the case England would never see the Captain again. He would explain everything when he arrived, as it was so romantic it would take too long to write details. She might guess now what took him to America. A few more days and he would be in the presence of her dear self and uncle, and then—but no

more—only patience—and in his heart praying that nothing had happened in his absence, Rake mailed the letter—which her mother received.

One week later Rake sailed for England.

When Rake told Captain Hardesty that it was rumored that Ruth was engaged to marry Rushton, the Captain put it down as idle talk. He had not forgotten that Ruth so often had told him that while he lived she could never think of another, and that on his return he would find her waiting for him. That all this had ended when his death was confirmed by the war office. True, she was not married when Sanders called on her father to make arrangements about the stock. He would now count the hours until he got that longed-for cable, but which he would hardly have the courage to open when it arrived—that cable with the one word would make him happy for life, or a wanderer, never to know peace of mind again. He could not command time to fly—but the great suspense until he knew all was crushing him—the holding back of the letter by Mrs. Robinson had caused all his mental agony; for he reasoned that, if Ruth was alive, she would have answered Rake's letter on the instant of receiving it—what had never occurred to him before occurred now—she was either married or dead. There was nothing for it; he must wait—wait—wait.



CHAPTER XCVIII.

THE year of grace that Ruth had asked of Rushton had expired. He had importuned her time and again to name the wedding day, but could never get her consent. He thundered, bullied and scolded Mrs. Robinson, telling her that she had misled him as to her daughter's intention; calling her a trickster, and that he would never enter the house again—only to be brought back each time by a note she would send him.

Mrs. Robinson, who for the past twelve months had been on tenterhooks for fear something might happen that would spoil her plans, now that the time had expired, was determined that Ruth should fulfill her promise. In an artful manner she had been continually drawing on the rich Rushton, he allowing himself to be bled in the most lamblike fashion. Rushton, as the reader may judge, was no fool with his money; he knew he was being bled, and was willing for it to continue, until something definite should occur.

Rushton, Sr., noticing the great anxiety and up-hill task his son had set himself in trying to marry Ruth, spoke to him on the subject. His son replied with a volley of oaths—telling him it was none of his d—d business, as he guessed he knew what he was doing, and warning him and the whole d—d lot of them to keep their mouths shut, or, by gad, he'd shut them. It was coming to something, he said, if he couldn't attend to his own private affairs.



Between Mrs. Robinson and Rushton there was no modesty or shame at their mode of what we might call warfare, in their attempt to bring about this marriage. It was for Ruth's own good, reasoned Mrs. Robinson, and as for Rushton, he didn't reason at all. He had been used all his life to having his own way, and a conscience or sensitiveness were things he was not bothered with. It was arranged between this well matched pair that they would corner Ruth and force her to set the day for the wedding; they argued that she could not refuse, as the twelve months' grace that she had exacted had expired.

The following morning, after breakfast, while Mrs. Robinson was talking to Ruth in her most charming manner, a ring came at the door bell.

"Good-morning, Ruth; good-morning, Mrs. Robinson," said Rushton, as he came thundering into the little parlor.

The program that he and Mrs. Robinson had arranged was nevertheless galling to Rushton. He had made up his mind a thousand times that he would bring Ruth to her senses; but with all his riches, and his manner of bulldozing everybody, this girl—damn her—when in her presence, he did not know how to account for it, but he felt like a whipped cur.

This morning, however, it would be different; he had his champion with him, and she was worth a dozen such as he in a game of the kind they now had on hand.

With a brilliancy of manner that was perfectly charming, and a finesse that could scarcely be excelled, Mrs. Robinson began to finish with a master stroke the last chapter of the plot.

After beating about the bush for some time, she said:

"I think, Mr. Rushton, I'd better retire, and allow you young people to arrange your private affairs?"

"By no means, Mrs. Robinson," said Rushton. "There is nothing that I would not wish you to hear—unless Ruth would prefer to be alone?"

Ruth, replying, said she would prefer her mamma to remain.

Mrs. Robinson began: "Is your London residence near completion, Mr. Rushton?"

"Yes," answered Rushton smilingly. "The situation, though, is rather amusing; I am building my castle before the lady has consented to occupy it."

"I thought that was arranged some time ago," answered Mrs. Robinson, coyly. "What are you young people thinking about? Why don't you name the day and stop your mooning? I think you are very slow, Mr. Rushton. Here's June at hand; one of the most delightful months of the year, and I'm sure traveling in such weather as this would be a perfect dream."

"All I'm waiting for, Mrs. Robinson, is for Ruth to name the day."

Ruth was cornered. The twelve months' grace had expired and no word of "*him*." Hemmed in as she was by two persons who knew no pity, her father in abject poverty, and who, notwithstanding all that he would gain by this alliance, had told her to please herself. This unselfishness on the part of her father had its effect. She listened to her mother and Rushton without speaking a word.

"Have you nothing to say, darling, in answer to Mr. Rushton's request?" queried Mrs. Robinson in a soothing manner.

Ruth, with head bowed, remained silent.

Mrs. Robinson knew that any further delay was dangerous; the wedding must take place with all possible speed. Rake's letter decided her on using strong measures.

"Why not make it the twenty-first of this month, Mr. Rushton?" said Mrs. Robinson.

"My dear Mrs. Robinson, that is perfectly satisfactory to me."

Ruth still remained silent.

"Silence gives consent, Mr. Rushton; and really, Ruth, your bashfulness almost amounts to rudeness; and you, Mr. Rushton, I'm afraid let business run away with you, so that you have forgotten how to be gallant. I can assure you, Ruth's father and I arranged matters without such a fuss as you young people have made over this wedding."

Shaking hands with Ruth, and telling her that he would call at the mission house on his way back from the office, Rushton, followed by Mrs. Robinson, went out of the parlor, she closing the door behind her.

"Well, it's settled at last," said she.

"Yes, d—n it, but she appeared as if in a dream. Why didn't she show some animation about it? I believe she's still in love with that d—d Captain."

"My dear Rushton, you wrong Ruth in thinking as you do; it was her extreme bashfulness which caused her silence; but when you're married a month, my dear, you'll find her the most loving wife, and oh, how proud you will be of that goodness and virtue that has taken you so long to win! She thinks you're such a noble fellow."

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CHAPTER XCIX.

AT the time that Royal, Renshaw, Brady and Bowers were making their way to Europe, a gentleman with the appearance of a Westerner put up at the Palmer House in Chicago. Upon being shown to his room he began to dress with scrupulous care. Putting on a new suit of clothes, the trousers of which had razor-edge creases; gorgeous necktie and patent leather shoes, set off with a new silk hat—this completed his toilet, except a walking cane, which the salesman who sold him his outfit said was the proper thing, and which, by its size, would have done justice to a college sophomore.

This gentleman, as he emerged from the hotel, engaged an automobile, giving the driver instructions to drive to a certain apartment house on Stony Island avenue.

A chic maid answered in the affirmative his inquiry as to whether Miss Malcom was at home, and escorting him to a daintily arranged parlor, asked him to be seated while she announced him. Seating himself on the chair, silk hat in hand, he waited with suppressed excitement the coming of Madge. He was as nervous as a schoolboy over his first love affair.

Madge, giving her hair a toss with her fingers, as she straightened and tightened her bodice, then rubbing her face with a cloth on which she had sprinkled some preparation to tone the complexion, she once more surveyed herself in the triple full-length mirror,



and assuming a gay, debonair air, marched into the parlor.

Hearing the swish of a lady's dress as Madge approached, the visitor was keyed up to concert pitch as to how he would be received. He had forgotten the little formality of procuring cards when he purchased his elaborate outfit, and the servant simply announced a gentleman to see Miss Malcom.

"Why, Mr. Harvey—good heavens!" and grasping his hand with an effusion of the most sincere affection, Madge deliberately kissed him in that off-hand manner that a daughter might use toward her father. "Mamma, do come here right away; here's our good, kind friend, Mr. Harvey."

Meek had written to Madge that the chances were that Harvey would call on them now that the smash had taken place—meaning the Jack-Pot mine—and that she had better look to her mother and watch that she did not commit herself in his presence.

Harvey's hat and cane having been taken care of, and permission granted him to smoke, he sat back in a comfortable arm chair and puffed rings of smoke from a choice perfecto while waiting the preparation of luncheon.

Mrs. Malcom magnified a thousand times all that Harvey had done for Madge during her stay in Denver, and how delighted she was to make his acquaintance, as, ever since Malcom's death (pausing and wiping a faint resemblance to a tear from her eye), she had led the life of a recluse, and in consequence had been very lonely—and "Oh, Mr. Harvey, I am worried to death at times when I think whatever will become of me if Madge should marry."



During a pause in the conversation, Madge re-entered the room.

"Now, Mr. Harvey, come and see if I have fixed things to your liking," and taking Harvey's arm, led the way to the dining room.

Both mother and daughter vied with each other in making things pleasant for him. He never had had such attention paid him before, and begged of them, when the meal was over, to allow him to hire a carriage and take them driving. They asked him if he would not please excuse them, as the visit was so sudden, and they were not prepared; but would be pleased to go next day.

At the close of his visit Harvey was satisfied with himself and the world in general; and, as he walked down Stony Island avenue, pondered over the manner in which he had been received.

"By Christopher! The old lady's not at all bad looking—never would have believed she was old enough to be Madge's mother. Darned if I know which to set my cap for. The old lady talked kind of spoony—I can't marry both of them, that's certain."

We must overlook this little vanity on the part of Harvey. Women were a weak spot in his character, and his education in reference to them, like most of us, was being acquired under forced draught. When the draught was shut off he could reason; but his reason would go to the four quarters of the universe when the draught was again applied.

Madge and a lady friend at that time were taken to the various places of amusement by that class of men that are supposed to be the most up-to-date in everything that takes place. They were bachelor clubmen and sporting stockbrokers, with a sprinkling of the



richest young bucks from the monster business concerns of Chicago.

The day following Harvey's visit he again called at the Malcom residence and took Madge and her mother for a drive, returning in time for dinner. After dinner, Harvey, seated between mother and daughter, was in a state of ecstasy that he had never known before.

While the gay old bachelor is enjoying himself there is a ring at the door bell, and in bounds Madge's lady companion, who, after kissing mother and daughter (although she had seen them the evening previous), was introduced to Harvey—whom she was delighted to meet, so she said.

In the meantime there were several more rings at the door bell, and each time there was admitted one of the gilded set of Chicago's clubmen.

The sight of these gay, rollicking fellows was the Waterloo of Harvey's aspirations to ever capture Madge.

His countenance, as each of the swagger set was admitted, changed until it wore a most woe-begone expression. He saw at a glance that he was out of the running with these young bucks, and was congratulating himself on the fact that he had not proposed to Madge, as he now realized that he would surely have met with a refusal. He never felt so abashed in all his life; but our dear Madge came to his aid.

After Harvey had been made as uncomfortable as possible by the condescending manners of these young bloods, which followed the introductions, Mrs. Malcom was called into one of the rooms, and a few words spoken to her by Madge. In a very short time Harvey was asked if he would not assist Mrs. Malcom in some trifling matter she had on hand in one of the



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other rooms; and the gallant Harvey was delighted. When Madge returned she found Harvey with outstretched hands, holding a skein of wool which Mrs. Malcom was winding into a ball. Madge's tact had smoothed the ruffled plumes of the gay Westerner, at the same time paving the way for a husband for her mother.

Madge had an object in view, and the brains to put it into execution should the chance occur; but lacking as she did a chaperon to smooth the way for her, it seemed as if the hand of almost every one was against her when she attempted to move up a notch socially.

"Who is she? Where does she come from?" was asked time and again by the ladies Madge chanced to meet. It was almost a case of "Crucify her!"

This girl, Madge, during the five years of her married life, had slowly swallowed the bitter pill of experience; she now somewhat understood men; and this knowledge she would now use for the scheme she had on hand.

The sarcasm and ironical satire she had to submit to from some of the people that wanted to know who she was when she attended any of the social functions, caused her to make up her mind that she would, if such a thing were possible, meet them as an equal.

Madge had created a furor among the gilded set of this certain class of men just mentioned, and she was now determined if possible to capture one of them for a husband. She knew the chances were against her marrying the man on whom she had centered her affections, and knowing this, had determined that the weakest nature of the many to whom she had been introduced, would be her grandstand play for a husband. if—he had the means; then these people who now



snubbed her would have to, through her husband, admit her into their society. Once in the swim they should be paid back in their own coin—tenfold.

As stated, the girl was brainy. She knew what the men thought of her; also that she, like a great many other poor girls, were looked on as playthings for these rich men. Then again she would reason, had not some of the richest men in the States begun by amusing themselves with these poor girls until the little innocent had woven a net around the Goliath that only the wedding ceremony could remove?

More than one grand dame who at present are numbered among the four hundred of New York city, were at first playthings for the scions of these wealthy families.

At first the members of these families rave and storm, but where a young gentleman has a will of his own, and above all can handle his own money, and thinks his dignity is assailed when they begin to dictate to him whom he shall or shall not marry; and suppose the dear young lady has had her eye teeth cut and keeps the one main chance in view—then what is to stop the landing of the fish in her little net?

Madge, with her tailor-made dresses into which she seemed to have been poured, so well did they fit her, had an art of creating admiration by her rich but subdued apparel. This appearance, with her charm of manner, combined with nature's endowment of a figure and complexion that needed no artifice; these charms, still further enhanced with a soft, musical voice, helped her not a little in her pursuit of a rich husband.



CHAPTER C.

WHAT was at first considered a flirtation on the part of Harry Walters, one of the most promising members of the Chicago Stock Exchange, was fast emerging into a stage more deep and lasting. At a reception to which he had taken Madge, and at which there were not a few who considered themselves the élite of Chicago's social circles, Madge found herself very much snubbed by the ladies present. The same old story—who was she? Had she a chaperon? They had never seen or heard of her before. Where had Walters picked her up? While these ladies made Madge as miserable as ladies only can, the dear men flocked around her, and she, perfectly indifferent to the many scathing looks she received from the partners of the different young gentlemen present, enjoyed herself (apparently) to her heart's content. Inwardly, however, at this reception she was very miserable, but gritted her teeth and bided her time.

"Harry ought not to have brought Madge to this affair," said one of the old rounders. "He might have known she'd be snubbed. Damn it! I think the fellow is completely gone on her; shouldn't wonder if she hooks him."

"Say, Prowler," said Dick Taylor, addressing the last speaker (who had received his title through keeping late hours), take a look at Madge as she stands there on the floor, and then look around the room. I ask you if there is one of them that can hold a candle to her? When she's around they are all nine spots."



"Little bit gone on her yourself, Dicky," replied the Prowler.

"Well, I'll just tell you what it is, Prowler; I'm always a little sweet on a clever girl, and that little girl over there can give this crowd cards and beat them hollow at any old game. She's witty; she's pretty; and better than all, she's brains. When she goes out on the street she has them all beat to a standstill. She's grace and perfection itself."

"Dicky, you're dead gone on her," came from half a dozen young chappies in the room who were listening to the conversation. "It's no use, Dick, my boy," resumed the Prowler jeeringly, "Walters has her pat; you haven't a look-in."

"Perhaps not, Prowler, I'm satisfied; I've had one evening's pleasure with the girl," resumed Taylor.

"Oh, come off, Dick!" from several of the members. "Why, you've only been introduced to her a day or two ago. That won't wash, Dicky."

"That's all right, gentlemen; I took her to the theatre last night, and never enjoyed the society of a young lady so much in my life."

"All rot, Taylor; don't believe a word of it," said the facetious Mr. Prowler.

"Right you are, Prowler; I've been trying for the past two weeks to take her out, and by gad, she won't go anywhere that I ask her," said young Billy Reeves, nicknamed the "Headlight" on account of the huge diamond he wore in his bosom, and who had inherited from his father a fortune made out of pork.

"What do you know about it, Reeves?" replied Taylor.

"I know this much; I'll bet you the wine for the party, and after we clear out of here we'll go and



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drink on the loser, that you've never been to the theatre with Miss Malcom," answered Reeves.

"That's business," said the Prowler, who was anxious for the bet to be made, as he had a horror of going to bed early, and did not care a jot who lost so that they had a merry night of it, which would be bound to ensue after they got to their rendezvous.

"You're on, Reeves," replied Taylor, "and I'll not only bet you the wine for the party that I took her to the theatre last night, but I'll bet you a wine supper that I'll take her again before the week expires."

"Damn it, he's bluffing. Take him up, Flash," said the Prowler, to young Reeves (Flash being another nickname for Reeves).

"That's a go, Taylor; I'll take both bets."

Madge satisfied young Reeves that she had been to the theatre with Taylor, and the chaffing that Reeves got while they were making a night of it, determined that young gentleman that he would make the greatest effort of his life to get Harry Walters into his confidence and make it impossible for Taylor to take Madge to the theatre within the next week. While they were making a night of it at the expense of young Reeves, the bet of the wine supper was discussed and kept alive by the Prowler and his boon companions. That night, supper for all those present and any friend they chose to bring, was arranged for, to take place the second day after the expiration of the time set for the bet between Taylor and Reeves. The Prowler was given carte blanche to go ahead and order it, and whoever lost was to pay the bill. This just suited the Prowler; and it just suited Dick Taylor, as he was playing a lone hand in a certain matter that we shall soon bring to light.



CHAPTER CI.

HARRY WALTERS was furious when he heard of the bet which had been made between Dick Taylor and young Flash. He'd be d—d, so he said, if Madge should go to the theatre with either of them; and he'd punch that sap head of Flash's if he didn't attend to his own affairs—the d—d young jackanapes.

Dick Taylor was one of those quiet, unassuming fellows that a man meets once in a while at some of the clubs. He was somewhat of a sport; but at the same time a gentleman. He never dressed in a loud manner, though he attended all the sporting events in his easy, indolent way. He had taken Madge to the theatre as a gentleman would take his wife, with the most honest intentions, and, as stated, enjoyed her company. He was not a marrying man, but would like to have seen Madge capture one of his rich acquaintances. They had become very confidential while taking a little supper after the theatre; and Madge's five years of married life had gained her such experience that she could now understand men better and read a little between the lines.

Taylor's trip to the theatre with Madge, and a visit to her apartments where he had met her mother, had made a favorable impression on him; this, and the brains that the girl had, decided him, and he told her that he would do all he could to help her get a husband that would be something of a catch from a pecuniary point of view.

When this supper had attained the notoriety that Taylor knew such an affair would among this certain class of men, he called at the Malcom apartments at a



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time when he supposed Madge would be alone, judge of his surprise to find Madge and Walters talking confidentially.

The maid who answered the bell in response to Taylor's ring was in a quandary what to say in answer to his query as to whether he could see Miss Malcom. Being in the confidence of Madge, she took Taylor's card, ushering him into the dining room. The parlor door being open as Taylor walked towards the dining room, caused Walters to turn his head at hearing the footsteps; they both recognized each other; Taylor bowed; Walters frowned. Madge was in a dilemma; but there was nothing else for it, so she brought Taylor into the parlor, whereupon he immediately proffered his hand to Walters. That gentleman, frowning in a fierce manner, and refusing the proffered hand, said:

"Look you here, Dick, this has got to be stopped, and at once. I'm not going to stand by and see Miss Malcom's name become a byword among a lot of conceited puppies, such as that young Flash, Prowler, and others, who go gadding about drinking, and with every glass they put to their mouths, mentioning Miss Malcom's name. I won't stand it; and the man that repeats her name in any way but that of a lady will have to answer to me—and that goes, Taylor, whether it's you or any one else," thundered Walters, as he paced up and down the room in a tragic manner.

"Harry, I always thought I was a friend of yours, and if that friendship has ceased on your part, kindly let me know. You have seen fit to upbraid me this morning in rather an unjust manner, and have taken it upon yourself to be the champion of Miss Malcom. Might I ask, Harry, if Miss Malcom's future happiness has been placed in your hands for safe keeping?"



"What the devil are you driving at, Taylor?"

"Just what I said, Harry. I want to know if I am talking to a friend—if not, then we can better understand each other. Also if Miss Malcom has become your absolute property, if I may use such an expression. Again, I want you to point out to me if I have done anything unbecoming a gentleman in reference to Miss Malcom? We are here in her presence, Walters, and if you have any charges to make, fire away, and be done with this "grandstand play" which you have seen fit to adopt—I strongly object to it—I do, really."

Walters was furious.

"What about this confounded supper that is the talk of all the clubs? If I am not misinformed, you're the one that started all their tongues wagging."

"Walters, I'm not going to brook an insult, even from you. If you're a gentleman, as I firmly believe you are, I ask you to grant me the privilege of explaining in any other place but here; I'm really surprised at you broaching this subject in the presence of Miss Malcom."

"You said you were willing to have the affair aired in her presence; are you afraid to answer?"

"If you're alluding to the supper, Walters, I'll confess in Miss Malcom's presence I am to blame; if you have any other charges to make I'd like to hear them."

"I'll have an understanding with you, Dick, at another time."

"When you're ready, Harry, you'll find me on hand, as I'm not aware of being in the habit of running away when it comes to a show-down."

"Miss Malcom," exclaimed Taylor, "I called this morning to make a friendly visit, and if my presence here is annoying to you, I shall immediately take my leave."



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"Why, Mr. Taylor, I'm sure mamma and I are always delighted to have you call, and I'm at a loss why you even think that your presence here is not always welcome."

Walters frowned fiercely at her during this conversation.

"In that case I'll stay, as I have a little matter on hand that I wish to speak to you about."

Walters here arose and asked Madge if he might speak to her, at the same time walking towards the door, saying:

"I'll see you at the club to-night, Taylor; then we'll settle this matter one way or the other."

"Any time, Harry, will suit me," answered the imperturbable Taylor.

"She's hooked him, and if she can use the landing net with the skill I think she's capable of, why, everything is lovely; and Dicky, my boy, you've done a good turn."

While thus soliloquizing Taylor heard the door close and the gentle swish of a lady's dress told him that Madge was coming into the room.

"Well, Madge, I suppose he's told you all about my bet, and dwelt on the notoriety of the supper."

"Yes, he's told me everything, and given me my orders that I'm not to go out with anybody—and especially you."

"Everything is working charmingly. When is he coming again?"

"To-night."

"Good! Now, Madge, everything depends on you. I want to see you land this fellow. He's not a bad sort, and is well fixed—mamma's pet and all that sort



of thing. You must draw the long bow—fall into everything he suggests—and above all play the martyr and ask his advice where you shall and where you shall not go. Use me in a fierce manner—don't misunderstand me—I'm desperately in love with you, and have annoyed you to death by asking you to marry me; but it must be forced from you, as it were, at the time he restricts your seeing me. He'll get no satisfaction from me. Don't think, Madge, that I am such a jackass as to think that I could begin to post you how to land this fellow, as the wiles of the fair sex are so subtle that no man has ever been wise enough to fathom them. What I wish to say is that you have my permission to use me in any manner you wish that will further your ends. You go ahead and use your own judgment in the matter, but above all, strike while the iron is hot, and play me against him at all times; I'll stand for it."

The coming supper, the result of the bet between young Flash and Dick Taylor, was the talk of Chicago clubdom. It was to be a regular old stag affair. All the bucks, both young and old, had their nets out trying to fish up a ticket. They knew there would be a night of rollicking fun, with wine galore, and no doubt a side show thrown in, besides hearing stories from some of the gay old rounders that could not be beat.

Walters was furious at the notoriety this supper was attaining. He called at the Malcom's early the same evening, having driven there immediately after coming off 'change. He coaxed and pleaded, then begged. At last Madge said:

"Then if you insist that I must not go to the theatre with him, what shall I say to Mr. Taylor when he calls, Walter dear? He is here at all times of the day im-



portuning me to marry him, and I'm afraid he'll do something desperate if I refuse him as coldly as you say. Don't you think I had better go with him to the theatre this time, and I'll promise you that I'll never, never see him again."

"Madge, I ask you, I implore you—forgive me—but I command you not to go to the theatre with that man. There has been enough notoriety already about this bet, and I am given to understand that every sport in Chicago is going to attend this supper. I'm just crazy when I think about that young Flash, Prowler, and a score of others bandying your name around. I'll be there, and if anybody says, acts, or insinuates by word or deed, other than he would about his wife, sister or daughter, I'll knock him down—Taylor had better look out."

Madge refused to go to the theater with Taylor, and the supper took place at his expense; and such a night as Chicago's clubmen will always remember. All the blasé old rounders were present. The master of ceremonies, who, it was very evident had been posted by Dick Taylor what to say, in addressing the members, passed off the bet in as light a manner as possible. Then Taylor arose, stating that he hoped everybody would enjoy themselves, and if any gentleman present knew how this supper came about, he hoped that the lady's name would be kept as sacred as the names of their own sisters and wives.

"Good fellow, Dick!" from a number of voices. Calling for silence, he said:

"Gentleman, I have lost this bet. I suppose though, I'm not the first, and do not suppose I'll be the last, who through egotism has made a fool of himself. One



word more: there is an old adage, gentlemen, which says that "an open confession is good for the soul." Now in defense of the fair name of the young lady who was the indirect cause of this supper being given to-night, and those friends of mine present who know her, I wish to make use of that adage by saying publicly that she has refused my hand in marriage."

"Bravo, Dick! Your health, Dick! Better luck next time, Dick!" from a score of voices. They knew, they said, that Dick was sweet on Madge — why, anyone with half an eye could see it.

Walters, who was present, sat apart from the other members, and as Taylor stood up to speak, he also arose. Taylor noticed him, but refused to hold the fierce gaze which Walters centered on him. As he finished his oration their eyes met, Taylor with a calm, dignified manner returning the fierce gaze of Walters—all eyes were centered on the two men—each carried a revolver—a taunt—a mistaken word meant a tragedy—the tension is extreme—the club members hold their breath—a silence that is oppressive overspreads the assembly—a member suddenly arises from his seat—takes the arm of Walters, who glares at him—then recovers himself and together they abruptly leave the club house.

Now that Madge was on the verge of entering good society, the one thing that rankled in her heart day and night, never giving her a moment's peace of mind, was the thousand dollars she had cajoled from Harvey.

She had been received into the Walters family; and during a dinner given in her honor, while conversing with Harry Walters' mother, her guilty conscience smote her heavily. She would now give the world to have continued the pure life she once led.



CHAPTER CII.

THE marriage of Miss Madge Malcom to Mr. Harry Walters took place in one of Chicago's most fashionable churches. They were the ideal groom and bride; and as they walked down the aisle of the church many commented on their fine appearance.

Of all the presents Madge received, none were finer or more costly than the one from Mr. Taylor, and which Madge asked her husband if she might retain, or should she return it. Her husband smilingly told her that he thought Dick meant all right, and that she would please him by accepting it.

Madge was now married, and this Mr. Taylor, although not given credit for it, was a moral man after his own fashion. He revered the holy bonds of matrimony, and looked upon them as the rock that had stood the ravages of all ages, and the one mighty bulwark that kept society from destroying itself.

The night of their wedding, Madge told her husband that she had just one thing to confess to him—that she owed a thousand dollars.

"I'm lucky, Madge, it isn't ten," said Walters, playfully, as he gave her a check for the amount.

Madge is fast becoming a model wife. Her better nature under her new conditions is asserting itself, and she now is looking back with horror on the unholy career she had mapped out to follow.

It is very evident Madge has succumbed to Harry Walters' love and kindness, and is now deeply in love with her husband.



During Harvey's many visits to the Malcoms, although the period of time was short, his education in reference to the ladies advanced rapidly, and in consequence he soon disabused his mind of ever winning Madge for a wife. With her mother, however, it was different, and his courtship of the elder lady ran very smoothly, nothing occurring to cause a jealous pang to the heart of the gay Westerner.

Madge, before preparing for her European tour, determined if possible to bring about the wedding of Harvey to her mother; and as the way had been nicely paved, it did not take the practical Madge long to bring the billing and cooing pair of little innocents into the matrimonial ranks. Mrs. Malcom told Harvey it was so sudden when he popped the old-time question, and was very much afraid that she would have to see Madge about it—so she gave Harvey to understand—as he perhaps knew what grown-up daughters thought of their mammas marrying again.

Calling Harvey into the little parlor of the flat on the evening of his marriage to her mother, Madge closed the door, and taking from her pocketbook the check her husband gave her, handed it to Harvey, saying:

"Mr. Harvey, this is the proudest moment of my life. Please accept this, and promise me you'll never mention it to mamma—kiss me, papa, for such you are now," and before Harvey could refuse to take the check she ran out of the room.

* * * *

Mr. and Mrs. Walters having departed for Europe, Harvey has decided to take his wife to California to spend the honeymoon.



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Mrs. Harvey has made the rounds of the tenants in the apartment house where they reside, and with Mrs. Brown is waiting on the sidewalk for the arrival of the cab that is to convey them to the depot.

While Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Harvey are gossiping, their neighbors in the front apartments are looking down on them from their windows; there are also quite a number of stragglers waiting at the door; while a close observer might notice two robust minions of the law exchange glances with two smart business-looking men, as they slowly pass Harvey's residence.

One of the business-looking men approaches Mrs. Harvey, and in a polite manner asks if she and Mr. Harvey are about to leave the city. Mrs. Harvey answered in the affirmative just as Harvey emerged through the front door.

"Please introduce me to your husband," kindly asks this business-looking man.

"With pleasure," answered Mrs. Harvey in a gushing manner.

When Mrs. Harvey introduced this man to her husband he grasped Harvey's hand as in a vise while his companion, as quick as a flash, grasped Harvey's other hand, and in a shorter time than it takes to tell, Harvey was firmly handcuffed; the two policemen standing by to render aid if such were needed.

Knowing they had the right man, the officers and detectives took no chances on a struggle by reading to Harvey the warrant for his arrest for the Jack-Pot mine swindle until after they had the handcuffs on him.

The mortification depicted on Harvey's countenance was pitiable to behold. A desperate fight around a



mining camp where revolvers were used with deadly effect, he would have cared little about; but his arrest before all these neighbors just as he was about to start on his honeymoon completely unmanned him.

As the detective finished reading the warrant for Harvey's arrest, Mrs. Harvey looked around, and seeing Mrs. Brown—screamed—then collapsed gracefully in the arms of her neighbor.

The officers asked Harvey to enter the cab—the cab which was to have driven him and his wife to the depot to begin their wedding trip was now to be used to convey him away in durance vile—all this flashed on Harvey just as he looked around and saw his wife faint. Driven desperate, in an instant he was a caged lion, and raising his handcuffed hands was about to bring them down on the head of the detective when his intentions were frustrated.

Gulping down a thousand emotions in one single sob, he entered the cab and was driven to police headquarters.

The departure of Mr. and Mrs. Walters for Europe, and the arrest of Harvey, mark the final disappearance of these worthies.



CHAPTER CIII.

WHEN the steamer with Royal on board cast anchor at Alexandria, the scene that presented itself was the means of arousing, and once more bringing him back to that state of Bohemianism that was his by nature. As the grotesque and motley horde of humanity that eagerly awaits the arrival of each steamer at Alexandria charged on the helpless passengers and seized their baggage, Royal laughed for the first time since the night of the tragedy.

Among the porters that surrounded the steamer in their flat-bottomed boats, dressed as they were in all the colors of the rainbow, could be seen, Arabs, Bedouins, Copts, Abyssinians, Nubians, Greeks, and others of too hybrid an ancestry to classify.

Royal was pulled ashore by a great lusty fellow, his baggage following in another boat. When he landed he was at once surrounded by a score or more of porters, and as his baggage was taken out of the boat, each one of these men seized a piece. It seemed as if there was a tacit understanding among them that if it was only a collar box, no man was to carry more than one piece of baggage.

After paying these porters, who held on like grim death to his baggage until they received their pay, several others appeared and asked payment. These fellows had done nothing to deserve any money, except walk alongside the other porters and give their moral support either to the baggage or the men who were carrying it. It was such a clear case of holdup that



Royal gave the fellows a small sum of money for their nerve and smiling, mused:

"They say these people are behind in civilization. That may be; but for a bare-faced hold-up they can hold their own with the New York police."

When, in Alexandria, Royal began to hunt up an old friend who had been there a long time in the interest of an American firm of manufacturers.

In a week from the day of landing he had found this friend, but the gentleman in question had grown into a shrewd, taciturn business man, very different from what he was when in New York, and Royal, after spending a few days with him, bade him good-bye and took the morning express to Cairo, making the hundred and thirty-one miles in four and a half hours.

"The train moves a little faster than the people," he muttered as he arrived in Cairo.

Resigning himself to the attachés of the hotel, he moved about for a few days more like a man in a dream than anything else. The place would just suit a man of his disposition after he had thrown off the state of lethargy into which he had fallen since the death of Brady. The Oriental fashion, with the indolent ways of the people, who seemed to live for the day only, soon began to have a sort of fascination for him, and each day found him rapidly accustoming himself to the ways of the natives. Here he could drift along, and the luxurious ease that money gave in this city had its attractions for him.

Royal had made the rounds of the city and had not seen any one that he knew, although while strolling through Shepheard's Hotel he thought he saw a fellow clubman, but found out afterwards that he was mistaken.



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In a month after arriving in Cairo he rented a house in the fashionable part of the city, and had it furnished in the most luxurious Oriental style. In the meantime he had been introduced to a native, a well-bred, educated fellow, a linguist, who had traveled extensively, and who, having lost all his money in speculating, was willing to act as steward in taking care of Royal's house, besides those innumerable things that are required for an establishment.

Royal made up his mind when he rented this house that Cairo was as good a place as any for him to rusticate in. He would at least be out of the way of everybody except an occasional globe trotter, and possibly might not be known all the time he was there.

He had invested nearly all his money while in London in gilt-edged securities, thereby removing all worry about pecuniary matters.

Sauntering along with his native Oriental, who was now Royal's boon companion, they being at all times together, a person would have to take a second look at him to make sure he was not a native.

While the Orient, with its indolent ways, its abject poverty on one side, and untold riches on the other, does not appeal to the average European or American, still there are individuals from all parts of the globe whom the place just suits, not including those who, like Royal, for their safety make it their home.

This man Royal had an easy, indolent way of adapting himself to any and all customs; and his decidedly dark complexion, under the Egyptian sun was gradually becoming darker, while each week found him wearing something more of the native costume; besides attending as he did all the little native



society functions with his friend, where as if to the manner born he would drink his coffee and smoke his cigarette with the grace and naturalness of the Oriental. It pleased them to see him adopt their manners and ways; and when he appeared at the mosque with his friend, and was equally as devout (in appearance at least) he was taken into their abodes and ate their dishes with the greatest gusto.

With Royal, one religion was as good as another, and like his morals it never gave him any uneasiness by cropping out at the wrong time.

Through his friend who had acted as his agent, Royal had procured a well-bred team of carriage horses, and when driving on the Shoutra Road none caused more admiration. It was not to be wondered at that at this time Royal was gradually being surrounded with that class of adventurers and adventuresses which are to be found in all parts of the world, and in no place more so than in Cairo.

There you see the native Oriental with her youthful bloom of womanhood, which springs up and withers while her European sister is slowly maturing into a more lasting beauty.

It is needless to say in a very short time Monsieur Royal had been introduced to quite a number of these adventuresses, and the jealousy that existed among them for his favor was intense. Like most men of his class a new face and form immediately displaced the old love.

While this man had never in a sense been cruel to women, he had at all times trifled with their affections. In our cold Northern countries this state of affairs is tolerated; and our women to a certain



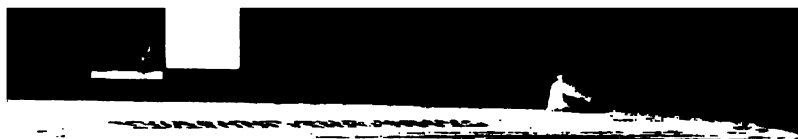
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extent are schooled to smother their feelings, and those who cannot, suffer in silence. But in the - Orient, when once the flame of the grand passion is lighted, discretion is thrown to the winds, and these women of hybrid ancestry are liable to go to any extreme, being utterly careless what becomes of them after they have taken their revenge on the object that had caused the green monster to take possession of them.

Royal had cast off one of these girls, Irene by name, - who was becoming irksome to him.

This cast-off mistress had all the craft and cunning that only comes to a woman from such a life as this woman had led. She was native born, her father - being a Frenchman. She had never known her mother, and if it had not been for the notoriety she had obtained on account of her beauty, this delightful father of hers would never have made himself known. She had had lovers from her infancy; but when Monsieur Royal came on the scene and she was introduced to him, then for the first time did she experience a love different from any of the amours she had known before. It was this fact that annoyed Royal more than anything else; it was getting, as he called it, "d——d tiresome."

He wanted to free himself from her—but how? The truth was he did not want an open rupture with her, as he hated a scene. Then again he was to a certain extent afraid of her ungovernable temper. Like most creatures of her passionate disposition, after an ebullition of temper, she would become so penitent and beg of him in such a piteous manner, that he always took her back into his favor again.



At this time Royal received a telegram informing him that his friend at Alexandria was seriously ill, and upon his arrival there, he found him hovering between life and death. After the crisis had passed, Royal, who had been in close attendance on him, journeyed forth for fresh air and exercise, and nearing the outskirts of the city was about to return when he saw a large number of men-o'-warships. It was very evident from the great commotion and heated conversation that was going on that there was something unusual about to take place.

The intermingling of these men, who swore by all that was lovely, and that which was not at all lovely, as to the merits of their champion, was brought about by the fact that two cruisers were at anchor in Alexandria Bay; one flying the flag of Uncle Sam; the other that of John Bull.

It appeared that sailors from the respective ships had obtained shore-leave some days previous and at that time had met in one of the resorts that sailors usually frequent. The gathering this day when Royal saw them was the result of the late meeting.

The English crew, it seemed, had told of a man on board their ship that could lick anything the Yanks could put against him. The Yanks retaliated by telling the Johnny Bulls that their man could walk around him like a cooper around a cask. The result of this badinage was that a match had been arranged between their respective champions and the meeting this day was to decide which was the better man.

As Royal followed the men he saw them leave the main road, going in the direction of some sand hills, that had been formed by the wind outside the city limits. These sand hills were just high enough to



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screen them from the passersby on the main road; and, once inside this friendly cover the men lost no time in getting their respective champions ready for the battle royal.

If there was one thing dear to the hearts of these men, it was a fight—a manly, fair and square stand-up fight.

Each man had his seconds, timekeeper and bottle holder; and while the champions of the respective ships were stripping for the fray, there was the liveliest of betting.

Many officers from each of the ships who dared not grace the ringside by their presence, sent commissions by the sailors; and while the principals were undergoing a vigorous rub-down from the hands of their seconds, and the finishing touches were being put to their toilets, these jolly Jack-Tars waved their money and challenged the opposite side to bet.

Just a few minutes before time was called there came a lull in the betting from the fact that they had bet themselves to a standstill. There was one thing certain; the doughty champion of many a hard battle—as this was to be a finish fight—would now have his colors lowered, and his backers would also be crippled pecuniarily for some time to come. No matter how the battle might go, there was no chance to hedge—“they were all in”—to use a sporting phrase.

As the men entered the ring and advanced to the center to shake hands, a silence came over the assembled tars as if the moment was too sacred for the slightest sound. There was not a man among the crowd of stalwart warriors who would not have swum ashore and run the risk of a court-martial to be present at this fight.



Perfectly nude, except a cincture around their loins, with a pair of spiked shoes to prevent slipping—exposed to the view the massive forms of the gladiators, of which Rome in her palmiest days never produced such specimens.

This was not to be the lightning flash of the courage of the Latin race, but the bull-dog courage which endures, and which under the most excruciating pain remains calm and unflinching, not daring to lose for a second by a flight of wild passion their temper, and thereby giving their opponent an opening; but with a doggedness that knows no defeat endures to the end, until nature calls a halt.

While both men were marvels of physical beauty, they were distinct in appearance. The American stood at least six feet, and as straight as an arrow. While his muscles did not stand out very prominently in any one part, they were so nicely proportioned that they gave him an elasticity of movement that pleases the eye in any contest of physical skill. From the chest he gradually tapered down to the waist, his legs and arms being in exact proportion to such a body, showing the nicety and symmetry of the limbs. From head to foot he was as fine a specimen of an athlete as a sculptor could desire for a model.

The Englishman, on the other hand, was at least four inches less in height, and on account of his muscular development appeared still shorter. The appearance of the man as he stood there, his blue eyes seemingly smiling an indifference as to the outcome of the battle, was a picture to behold. His head and neck, which at the back ran in a straight line, gave him the appearance of great strength,—which,



with his huge chest, showed the ruggedness and strong vitality of the man. From the chest down, his buttock and legs were framed in equal proportion. His appearance caused a murmur from both crews; such a specimen of physical strength had rarely been seen. It was very evident that the man could endure a great amount of punishment.

The rules having been read, the men shook hands and walked back to their corners. Then the seconds of both men advanced to the centre of the ring, and said a few words to the effect that they were all good friends, that only one man could win; and that they hoped there would be no hard feelings by the parties whose champion should have his colors lowered—it was to be a fair, manly fight, and their motto was “May the best man win.” Hats were tossed into the air, and amid a chorus of bravos, time was called.

As the men were about to leave their seconds’ knees, “Stop! Stop!” was cried from a dozen voices.

The cause of the commotion was the fact that two carriages with their inmates had drawn up just outside of the sand-hills, and as close as they could get to the ring-side.

When the match between the tars was first made, it soon traveled the rounds of the forecastle of each ship, then from the forecastle to the petty officers’ quarters;—there it was carried to the midshipmen; and was not long in reaching the ears of the respective captains.

Captain Barnes, of the American man-o’-war, was one of the old school, and anything that could show true grit had a warm place in his heart; and while he



dared not give his opinion on prize fighting public utterance, still, if the men were evenly matched, he was like Nelson in one of his memorable sea fights, and gave his blind eye to it. He had often seen this Jacky of his don the boxing gloves, and thought that Dick Perry could beat anything on two legs.

Captain Taber, of the British man-o'-war, heard the news about the same time as Captain Barnes; and as he was so fond of a "mill" that, had he dared follow his own inclination, he would have acted as bottle holder for Bob Towser, the British tar.

These two old sea-dogs were not long in getting together, and over a small bottle began to cudgel their brains as to how they could see the fight without losing their dignity—for see it they must. One of the tars, a man that they could place implicit confidence in, and one that stood well in confidence of his fellow Jackies, was taken into their confidence. This tar soon procured for them some old wigs, and, as the carriages followed the men to the scene of the battle, they adjusted their little disguises, which, as their heads only could be seen from the carriages, was an easy matter.

When several of the sailors approached these carriages, the men in the confidence of the respective captains, went forward to the carriages, and immediately returned to their shipmates, saying that they would answer that the gentlemen in the carriages were friends; that they had met them the night before and given them the tip.

This explanation satisfied the respective crews, and time was once more called.



CHAPTER CV.

THE men sprang to the centre of the ring, and commenced fiddling and feinting for an opening. Towser, the British tar, sends a wicked left hand blow aimed at the stomach of Dick Perry; but the nimble-footed American side-steps, and cross counters with a left hand blow, which, landing on Towser's nose, makes the Britisher sneeze; nothing daunted he bores in and receives another wicked left; then Perry makes an error by bringing his right hand into play, which act brings him within reach of his stronger opponent who batters his bulwarks with the force of a battering ram; they clinch, and the struggle commences for the fall, which ends in Perry back-heeling the Britisher.

They had scarcely got to the centre of the ring before Perry sends in a straight left which cuts Towser's eyebrow, which appears to bother him greatly.

With the strength of an enraged lion Towser now bores in, but is again met with a facer from the unerring left of Perry, then another, which lands on the sore eye, keeping the blood flowing. Towser, however, would not be denied, and amidst the howls of his ship-mates bores in, and is rewarded for his pluck by getting at close quarters—when Perry immediately clinches, and the struggle for the fall commences.

Towser's short arm work has told on Perry, and the Britisher gets the fall.

Towser, under the advice of his seconds was sent in to rush matters, as his left eye was nearly closed.



The agile Perry was there, however, and as the redoubtable Towser bored in met him with two left hand blows that almost closed his other eye. Towser, taking his punishment like the glutton he was, followed Perry around the ring, finally getting to close quarters, where the dull thud of his blows on Perry's body could be heard distinctly by the respective crews.

Perry now toed the scratch with two broken ribs; a badly sprained ankle, and his body bruised from the terrific punishment that Towser had administered. On the other hand, Perry, in Towser's eyes, was a very hazy being. It was by a kind of instinct that he located Perry in the ring, and there were cries of "take him away" from some of the more humane Americans.

Towser, however, would heed no one. He was there to fight. "He wasn't half licked," so he said. The round is short, Perry trying to finish the fight by a terrific right-hand swing as Towser bores in—Perry misses—they clinch—going to the ground locked in each other's fierce embrace.

Perry's ankle is swollen to twice its normal size, and the more humane of the tars want him to quit. "Quit—never!" The round proceeds.

Towser, though a sight to behold, was apparently as full of fight as when the fight began, but almost stone blind. He would rush at Perry and miss him by a yard.

It was evident to Perry, that if he was going to win this fight he must do so at once, as Towser might finish him if he got him into his iron grip again.

As Towser rushes wildly in, Perry braces himself, and taking deliberate aim,—crash—crash, with all his



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remaining strength went lightning like blows, which, landing on the British tar's face and neck, causes that worthy to drop his arms and stagger blindly around the ring in a vain attempt to corner Perry.

There stood the redoubtable Towser, courage personified, but as blind as a bat.

Perry, resting on one foot, and suffering from the severe punishment he had received from Towser, refrained from hitting his courageous opponent; bedlam now broke loose.

"Take him away, don't you see he's blind? Do you want him killed?" cried the American tars.

Towser threw out his arms and threatened anyone that came near him; his seconds seeing he had no earthly chance of winning, entered the ring and coaxed him to allow them to lead him away.

Such a scene that followed can better be imagined than described. Hugging and shaking hands with one another, the American tars carried Perry out of the ring; and after rubbing him down with brandy and giving him a copious draught of the same, they danced the hornpipe around their hero. He had upheld the honor of the States and the glory of their ship—but withal, they did not forget the doughty Briton, Towser, who was now sitting on his second's knee crying as if his heart would break. No one could do anything with him until Perry came and promised him another fight whenever their ships should meet again in port.

The fight being over and all bets paid, the tars surged towards the city, where they entered one of the many drinking places frequented by sailors.

The two old sea dogs, the captains of the respective ships, and the select few that had accompanied



them to the fight, drove away; and at the private quarters of one of the captains discussed over sundry bottles the fight; incidentally paying over their bets, and of course telling how, when they were young fellows they had stripped not a few times themselves; and d—— it, if the pinch came, they could do it again—so they said.

“Well, we’re all of one family, Barnes. You kicked over the traces, pulled out, as it were, and set up shop for yourselves, and the climatic conditions have altered your temperament and changed your physique a little. There may be a little cold feeling at times between our governments; but when we do make it up it is so much the sweeter; and if either one of them ever gets into a tight place—mark my words, Barnes, you’ll find us shoulder to shoulder, ready and willing to help the other out.”

“I believe you’re right there, Taber, every word of it,” replied Captain Barnes of the American cruiser.



CHAPTER CVI.

ROYAL, who had witnessed the fight, saw with joy his countryman win; while his admiration and sympathy for the plucky Towser was shown in a substantial manner, as he gave the tar some money, telling him not to mind. "Better luck next time," said he, as he grasped the tar's hand, shook it, and walked away.

Royal's sick friend having recovered, the following day he returned to Cairo, and once more begun his round of pleasure.

For the past two weeks Royal had been greatly smitten with a certain Mrs. Fitzmorris, an Englishwoman, the widow of a government official, whose husband some three months past had kindly relieved her of the trials and troubles of married life. She was considered the most prepossessing woman in Cairo—a decided blonde, whose widow weeds added an extra charm to her superb figure and complexion. Since her husband's death she had been living with friends, and had no great desire at the present time to go back to England, her income being only a mere pittance. She knew English society enough to know that there she would be a Mrs. Nobody, while here she was somewhat of a pet in the European colony, and those giving parties never omitted to send an invitation to the gay, dashing young widow. She had already ceased fretting about her dear departed, and knew that her prospects of once more joining the matrimonial ranks were far better in Cairo than in



England; and she hoped the next venture would be with some one that had more of this world's wealth than the late lamented Mr. Fitzmorris.

While Royal with his steward were driving daily on the Shoutra Road, they continually passed Mrs. Fitzmorris, who always accompanied her friend, Mrs. Barclay, the lady with whom she was living, and one or two of the young Barclays.

Royal's carriage being second to none in Cairo, the gay, dashing young widow very soon began to cast sly and furtive glances at the handsome American as they drove past each other; later, they would stare at each other as much as good breeding would permit.

Royal, like all men of his class, now knew no peace of mind until he was either introduced to Mrs. Fitzmorris or found that such was impossible. He was not known in Cairo, and until Dame Gossip made her appearance was on a level with the most exemplary. He confided to his steward his ardent desire for an introduction to Mrs. Fitzmorris; and that worthy, who, as stated, was a refined and educated Oriental, and as suave and diplomatic as only an Oriental can be, soon paved the way. Royal was satisfied that once introduced he could make his own running. He had found out both the past and the present standing of Mrs. Fitzmorris; knew her income; how she lived, and all about the Barclays—money will loosen the tongues of servants.

At this time one of the swell set in the European colony was about to give a ball, which, Royal's steward informed him, Mrs. Fitzmorris would surely attend. This steward, who had entry into the best society, both European and native, soon had the required in-



vation sent to Monseieur Royal; and from that night until the eve of the party, Royal, who all his life had been so indifferent to women in general, through being spoiled by a certain class, was as much worked up as a virtuous young lady over her coming out party.

While women had been in a manner the playthings of this man's life, yet as he entered the ballroom this evening he was seized with a feeling such as never before possessed him.

He was certainly one of the most striking men in the room, and as he sauntered around arm-in-arm with his steward, appeared outwardly as gay and debonair as usual. Soon they espied Mrs. Fitzmorris, surrounded by a swagger set of young men.

Awaiting a favorable opportunity, the suave steward, tightening his grip on Royal's arm, said something and they immediately sauntered to where Mrs. Fitzmorris was engaged in conversation with another lady, a friend of the steward's.

An introduction followed; then Monseieur Royal and the gay young widow were seen waltzing around the room, feasting their hungry eyes as if to pay up for the time lost while they were driving past each other on the Shoutra Road.

What won't infatuation do? for as yet these two people could not have kindled the holy flame. There was this blasé man of the world, who could not under ordinary circumstances be roused into dancing, and the gay young widow who was not a whit backward, cooing and billing like a pair of young doves.

Then followed a cozy corner with iced refreshments, until Mrs. Fitzmorris' lady friends were scandalized at the conduct of the charming widow.



Royal made the effort of his life to ingratiate himself into the good graces of the Barclays, with whom, as stated, Mrs. Fitzmorris was living. He was so adroit about it that Mrs. Barclay afterward said that she did not know how it occurred, but he won them all over before he had been calling a month.

Royal had money, and he used it with discretion. The young Barclays never had such expensive toys until Monseieur Royal appeared at their residence. The Barclay servants swore by him. The creaking, grating hinges of discontent, Royal oiled with King Gold—and it succeeded wonderfully. Drafts not coming on time it was a favor that Royal solicited to be allowed to advance the necessary amount, time and again, and was fearful lest they should offer payment. There are so many little things that ladies want, and those niggardly husbands (harsh creatures) deny them.

This, my dear Mrs. Barclay, might possibly account, in ever so slight a way, for the welcome the handsome American received whenever he called to see the gay young widow.

The gay young widow was now wearing diamonds. She had a blue white diamond ring that was such a dream that she got up in the night to look at it, and incidently to make sure it was not a dream in reality. Mrs. Barclay greatly admired it, and so did several acquaintances, but did Mrs. Fitzmorris think it right to accept such a costly gift from a gentleman whom she had known such a short time?

Royal took the young Barclays out driving; he ordered the donkey boys to call each day at their house to take them for a ride, and he settled the bill. Everything they wanted he bought them. The chil-



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dren adored him, as children always do those who buy them presents—they called him "Uncle Royal."

Barclay, who was in the government service, was not overburdened with wealth; and Royal, now a constant visitor, played cards at the Barclay residence every evening; he and Mrs. Fitzmorris being partners against Barclay and wife, and Royal lost five nights out of the six they played. He had imported some wine, and through an error they had sent him three times as much as he ordered, he had not room enough for it in his cellar, and would Barclay accept a few dozen?

"Mister dear, Mrs. Fitzmorris is old enough to look out for herself; and if people will talk, why, let them. I don't see anything strange about this American. It's all damn rot—short acquaintance—husband dead only three months. Suppose she lets this fellow slip through her fingers by waiting a year to please Mrs. Grundy, will they help her find another as rich? If at that time she is without money and friends will they keep her in style until some prince comes along and marries her? It's all jealousy. Gad! some of those who are talking would come here and carry the fellow off, body and soul, if they dared. He's all right—Great Scott! They talk about me giving the fellow *carte blanche* of our house—why, if they had this fellow's money they wouldn't notice us, my dear. Look at some of these snobs of countrymen of mine. Do they ever thaw out and make a good fellow of me like this man? I'm satisfied, and they can all go to thunder, Mrs. Barclay."

* * * *

Barclay was a good husband, and possibly the only drawback that kept him from being a model one



was his penchant for playing poker. He had lost considerable money of late, and had plunged to get even, but only succeeded in getting deeper into the mire. He gave his notes, and when due could not meet them, as Mrs. Barclay's demands left him very little to pay his gambling debts. Going to the Jews—they with their exorbitant rate of interest made life miserable for him. Over an extra bottle one night Barclay made a clean breast of his troubles to Royal, who then and there forced him to accept enough money to pay off all his obligations, and would not accept Barclay's notes. The tears were visible in Barclay's eyes at Royal's good fellowship, and he there vowed eternal friendship for him. By this act, Royal, as he expressed it, had Barclay "pat," and now all was clear sailing in his suit for the hand of the dashing young widow.

The Barclays had no more livery bills to pay, as they had carte blanche to use Royal's carriage at any time they chose.



CHAPTER CVII.

OF all the scenes in the wide, wide world, are there any equal to Cairo? Cairo, the Arabian capital of the desert, where you may see every nationality under the sun; and in the parade of this heterogeneous and grotesque horde of humanity, a kaleidoscope is at all times going on which is not at all displeasing—on the surface at least.

Combine all the capitals of the world, at their gayest day parades and it's a question if they equal Cairo during certain hours. It is safe to say that the most hardened type of the blase old rounder, who has done New York, London and Paris in turn, then comes to Cairo for the first time—it's a thousand pounds to a hay-seed that the old war-horse will prick up his ears, stiffen his back and assume the manner and style of the gayest of young colts.

The Shoutra Road on Fridays and Sundays (the holidays of the Mussulmen) is generally lined with the carriages containing the denizens of the different harems, from that of the viceroy to the lowest of the Pashas, guarded with the utmost jealousy by eunuchs who, in their warlike manner, threaten to annihilate any person coming near the sacred occupants of these carriages.

"If the Pashas," mused Royal, "who keep these fair dames only knew it, there would be no necessity for the warrior eunuchs to attend them on their drives. All they would have to do would be to remove the partly transparent veils which they wear, bringing into view



their penciled eyebrows, their thick flabby necks, and sack-like waists."

While embonpoint may be considered beautiful in the eyes of the Oriental, such big, fat, doleful looking creatures as these would scarcely be liable to raise the grand passion in the breast of one of the Anglo-Saxon race.

The freedom of this city, the people of which seemed to have no cares, suited Royal as he had never been suited before. His patronage in hiring donkeys for the Barclay children had already made him a favorite with the donkey boys, and these youngsters with the gazelle eyes, whenever Royal passed them, salaamed and showed their good will to an extent which Royal never failed to reward.

Royal now spent most of his time in the company of Mrs. Fitzmorris; and together they might be seen driving daily on the Shoutra Road, with the exception of Fridays and Sundays. This beautiful thoroughfare, lined on each side with acacias and sycamore fig trees, whose boughs meeting formed an arch, made it one of the most delightful of drives.

They attended the theatres together, and were to be seen at the French Comedy or the Opera House whenever a new play was announced. At times instead of returning to the Barclays' from the afternoon drive, Mrs. Fitzmorris would accompany Royal to his residence, where, during his absence and that of the steward, the fire-brand Irene held sway.

"I'm afraid that woman bodes no good to me, Royal," said Mrs. Fitzmorris, referring to Irene.

"Don't alarm yourself, Ada, dear; I'll see that she goes shortly. I think I can obtain a position for her



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with a friend of mine who wants a native house-keeper."

"I wish she was away now, Royal, as I shall never feel contented again in this house while she is here. I have a horror of the woman. I believe her to be capable of almost anything."

"There, there now, Ada, dear, don't worry; after this week she goes for good—I mean it this time."

"I know, Royal, but you are so indolent she is liable to talk you over again."

"Not this time, dear, when I know it affects you so much to see her here."

Whenever Royal and Mrs. Fitzmorris were playing chess in the parlor of an evening, Irene would steal around and peer through the blinds. Should she on these occasions, knowing she had been sacrificed for Mrs. Fitzmorris, see any signs of lovemaking, her jealous nature aroused her to such a degree that she appeared more devil than woman.

One night, after playing several games of chess with Mrs. Fitzmorris, Royal, who had that day bought a ring for her, was in the act of fitting it on her finger when Irene brought in the coffee. They were indolently smoking their cigarettes at the time, but as Irene placed the silver tray on one of the little Oriental tables, Mrs. Fitzmorris gave a sudden start, followed by a sigh and gasp.

Staring at her as he waited for Irene to leave the room before speaking, he then exclaimed:

"Good gracious, Ada! What's the matter? Are you sick?"

"No, Royal. That woman frightened me. Why do you persist in keeping her here? It's very evident she's desperately in love with you. Oh, Royal, if

you had seen the look of intense hatred on her face as you held my hand, I think you would have instantly ordered her out of the house. You're so indolent that I'm afraid you won't move in this matter until something terrible has happened."

"Don't worry, Ada, depend upon it she leaves tomorrow."

Irene, after leaving the coffee, explained as her reason for serving it that the servants were all busy. Royal then requested her to order one of them to wait in the small ante-room ready to attend his bell, as he did not wish her to wait on them.

"This is her last night in this house, Ada."

"Oh, I'm so thankful, Royal, you've decided to send her away."

Going out of the room in an apparently careless manner, Irene walked a few steps, then stealthily returned to the room door and listened to the conversation. She heard Mrs. Fitzmorris advise Royal to send her away, and Royal's answer to the effect that she would have to leave the house the following day. What she heard turned her into the most venomous and hateful of she-devils. She could have burned Mrs. Fitzmorris at the stake without the least compunction.

Going to a drawer where she kept some of her private articles, she took out a small phial and placed it in her bosom. She then sent one of the servants to the French cook for a pot of coffee, into which she poured half the contents of the phial, and when Royal ordered more coffee, Irene, who had anticipated this, gave the servant the coffee into which she had poured part of the contents of the phial.



*Irene the
murderess.*

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Mrs. Fitzmorris had not touched the coffee that Irene had brought in, as if by instinct she was afraid of it; but when the servant brought in the fresh coffee she gradually drank it. Royal toyed with his until it was about the right temperature, then swallowed it at a single draught.

In a little while he noticed Mrs. Fitzmorris dozing, but as they had been driving, supposed the air had made her sleepy. Very soon afterwards, however, a drowsiness began to creep over him, and as his eyes closed, his head gradually drooped.

At the door of the room, which was a little ajar, stood Irene with every feature distorted, leaving nothing but venomous hatred depicted in her countenance. She had cast to the winds all the womanhood in her nature, and now stood there in the character, as it were, of a wild beast. Yes, the tiger in the jungle would have been more merciful than she. This woman under the garb of friendship had struck down two of God's creatures without a moment's warning. With fiendish glee she stood there and watched her victims drop into that sleep that knows no awakening—then stealthily entered the room.

This deluded woman, with mind distorted, whose very nature had left her, who had known no peace night or day since the green-eyed monster had taken possession of her, and who now in her rancorous hate and jealous rage would have faced an impending doom, however horrible, provided she could accomplish the downfall of those that stood between her and her love for this man—saw as she entered the room that the poison had done its deadly work. With a bound she flew at the throat of Mrs. Fitzmorris,

*She then turned and fled to the door, leaving Royal
and the murdered Mrs. Fitzmorris.*

and in a voice that was more like the wail of a hyena than a human being, screamed:

"You stole him from me—now I take him from you. You laughed at me. You told him to put me out of the house. Speak! Speak! so I may tell you what I think of you," she exclaimed as she clutched the throat of the dying woman. "Ah, my reason leaves me, you are dying, yes, I killed you—Oh, but this is the sweetest moment I have known in months. Why don't you speak?"

Shaking Mrs. Fitzmorris by the throat as a terrier does a rat to make sure of its death, she released her hold of the dying woman and turned to Royal. In her mad frenzy and unholy love for this man she threw her arms around his neck, talking in a rabid and incoherent manner. Holding his head in her lap she showered passionate kisses on his lips, eyes and forehead—beseeching him to speak to her ere she joined him on his journey to the great unknown.

Taking from her bosom the small phial she poured the remainder of the contents into the cup that Royal had used. With one arm around his neck, she with the other took up the cup, exclaiming,—“See, see, loved one, I join you,” then swallowed the deadly draught. As her head rested on his bosom, and the drowsiness of the deadly sleep was overpowering her, the sight of her face as she once more raised her head was shocking to behold. Its insane appearance; the wildness of her eyes; the disheveled hair; the besmeared tear stains, while saliva slowly exuded from her mouth, gave her the appearance of some wild animal that had exhausted itself on its foe ere it died.

With arms encircling his neck, she once more tried



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× to raise his head; failing, she continued kissing his eyes, forehead and cheeks, and as consciousness was leaving her, with lips pressed close to his she murmured:

“You are mine now—they can never take you from me—we die together.”

- Royal died as he had lived, never thinking of the morrow. His friend in Alexandria looked after his burial and notified his niece, Miss Bertha Travers, Westchester, New York, U. S. A., of the death of her uncle, she being his only heir.



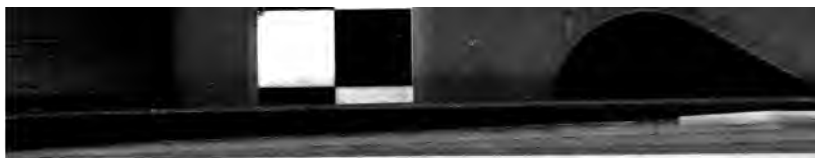
CHAPTER CVIII.

BOWERS and Renshaw are still following the races in England. The season has been to them a succession of heavy pecuniary losses. Play how they would, the end of each meeting found them very much on the wrong side of the ledger. They had paid for the best information; had bribed jockeys and rubbers down, but to no effect. They played form; then tried all the systems that were known; but still fate seemed against them. At last they tried book-making; but their Nemesis followed them.

While attending the race meetings they became acquainted with several trainers of small stables, one of whom was training for the Derby a horse by the name of Illusion. This horse was a rank outsider in the betting; but had been asked the question, and the report to the inside few was, "That he had burnt up the track."

At daybreak two or three mornings before Derby day, Bowers and Renshaw witnessed and timed the greatest trial of a thoroughbred it was possible to see — that is, for speed. If this horse would only run as well in the Derby as he did in this trial, or if he could run within two seconds as fast, they would be satisfied, as Illusion had made the trial in two and a quarter seconds less than Benson's chronometer had ever recorded a Derby winner.

Now, for various reasons, these two men had not courted any newspaper notoriety in reference to the large sums of money they had lost on the English



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race tracks, or Jubilee Juggins* would have been a very poor second in the sum total lost.

Most of the ill-gotten gains of Renshaw and Bowers have vanished, and they are now like a great many more about to try and regain at one single stroke all their losses, and then engage in some less hazardous business.

These men sent commissions to back this race horse Illusion all over England; but in all of the sporting clubs in London where betting took place they could bet on the "nod" as they had always been prompt in paying their losses on settling day.

This is Derby day, and the next hour will decide whether these men have recouped their great losses or whether they are ruined; it all depends on whether this horse that has made the sensational trial will win the Derby.

The stable money is on, and everybody connected with the owner and trainer, and others who are in the "know" have planked down their last dollar. The horse is trained to the hour. The trainer tells Renshaw and Bowers that he is satisfied, and that all he asks is a fair start.

With field glasses leveled on the horses, as they pranced, kicked and capered at the starting post, Bowers and Renshaw watch for the start with a strain on the system that only those can understand who have risked all on the hazard of a horse race.

"They're off—" from thousands of throats. False start; they slowly canter back to the starting post. In each of the breakaways Illusion is well to the front. At last after considerable delay in numerous false starts, the starter, catching them well in line, called

* A noted race track plunger in the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee.



in a stentorian voice "Come on—," at the same time dropping his red flag.

Swish, swish, swish, could be heard as the whips fell on the quivering thin-skinned flanks of those thoroughbreds whose jockeys have lost the coveted position they have been manœuvering for, and who now are frantically urging their mounts forward to catch up with the leaders.

Illusion has beat the starting flag, and is now running in front before some of the less fortunate have got into their strides.

On they come with Illusion two lengths in front, throwing up with their iron heels which scarcely seem to touch the ground, clods of turf. Passing the half mile post, Illusion, carrying the Renshaw and Bowers money, is still in front and going easy. His jockey, though not a fashionable one, is the equal of any in the race.

With as nice a pair of hands as ever felt a mount, perched high on the horse's shoulders, as he crouched low, with his head to windward of his mount's neck, he clucked and clucked with a gentle encouragement. Knowing the faint-hearted animal he was riding, he, with skill and judgment that even the only "Tod,"* in his palmiest days could not excel, urged his mount on.

This boy knew the horse he was riding better than his owners, and told them before the race that if the other horses ever caught him he knew their money was lost; but if he could keep in the lead there was nothing in the race that could run as fast—in a word—his mount was the fastest piece of horse-flesh on the English turf—but the rankest coward.

* A famous jockey.



The above information, as stated, had been given to the owners by their jockey, but they thought he was wrong in his opinion, and had every confidence in the horse—putting down his several defeats to lack of condition.

At the three quarters Illusion is increasing his lead as he swings down the course with long, graceful strides, seemingly without an effort; and it looks as though they will never catch him. At the mile the favorite and some of the others are asked the "question" by their jockeys, as they begin to shake up their mounts for the final effort; but the fast pace has already told on some of the faint-hearted. It was here that the courage of the genuine thoroughbred was put to the test. The favorite, Prince Charlie, was considered the gamest horse in England, and though everybody conceded him that honor, it was thought by the majority of the followers of the turf that the Derby was a little too far for him; but his known courage in races where he had hung on to the distance horses and beat them out had been the means of his being made the favorite; but in such races the pace had been slow—thus enabling him to put his great sprinting powers into effect on the home stretch.

The mile having been run in a fraction better than one minute and forty seconds, the field is pretty well strung out. Another eighth of a mile and the distance horses begin to loom up, with Prince Charlie at their heels.

The favorite having been nicely handled and nursed along, and kept as near striking distance as the terrific pace set by Illusion would admit, now made his



bid, as his jockey, who had had a double wrap on him all through the race, gave him his head. No coaxing, or urging of any kind did this noble thoroughbred require.

Like a frightened hare, his tremendous strides bringing his body closer to the ground, Prince Charlie passed them all but Illusion a sixteenth from the winning post.

It was here that Illusion heard the other thoroughbreds thundering behind him; the counterfeit in his nature at once asserting itself. He tried for a dozen yards to bound away from them, but feeling the pinch of the exertion, and hearing the coming on of the game thoroughbreds, he laid his ears back and refused to try a yard; but his lead was such that it seemed impossible for the exhausted Prince Charlie, who was now clear of his field and fighting his way gallantly, to ever overtake Illusion.

The terrific strain on Prince Charlie in running through his field has told—he has shot his bolt. The fast pace of the race, added to his brilliant spurt, which was almost phenomenal, has exhausted the noble brute.

From thousands of throats the cry is “A run-a-way race—Illusion in a gallop—a regular walk-a-way—” Prince Charlie however has yet to be reckoned with.

Prince Charlie’s jockey knows his mount is all in, and as the animal begins to swerve under the terrific strain, he gathers him up as well as he can.

Fifty yards from the winning post Prince Charlie is at the flanks of Illusion, whose jockey is afraid of using his whip knowing the cowardly nature of his mount. Prince Charlie is now running on his nerve—

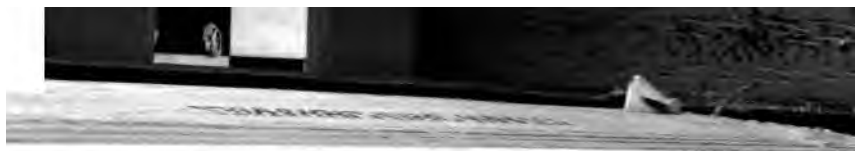


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nature being exhausted. No need of urging by his jockey, as still swerving under the terrific strain he creeps inch by inch—until now he is at the throat-latch of Illusion. Ten lengths from the winning post they are neck and neck—the air is rent with the din of the thousands assembled—every one seems to be imbued with the excitement of the struggle between the leaders. Strangers slap each other on the back and howl themselves hoarse.

The horses seem locked together; they are now taking stride for stride—both jockeys have drawn their whips—swish—swish—swish—Illusion curls up—Prince Charlie straining every nerve in one mighty bound passes the winning post in front by a nose.

The race for the Derby was the undoing of Bowers and Renshaw. They have not only lost every dollar they had, but are black-legs in the eyes of the book-makers, not being able to pay their losses, their bets having been made on the "nod." Realizing their position, and desperate at the loss of so much money, they go on a protracted spree, and when they come to their senses find themselves with only a few pounds to their name. They could not, it seems, keep away from the race track, and when their last shilling was gone turned "tout." They have descended to the lowest rung of the ladder; and as the associates of sneak thieves, touts, and low down gamblers, are shunned by all self-respecting men. With the aid of some English sharpers they finally succeeded in fleecing some of their own countrymen, until, becoming bolder, are arrested on a charge of forgery, and sent to prison for seven years. This time it is



the English law, and what is known in the States as a "pull" which can save a man even when he is sentenced, has not as yet been unearthed in England.

Two dead and two in prison is the ending of these four men, who, with their talents, had they followed the path of truth and righteousness might have been ornaments to society. The old maxim is only too true, that "Honesty is the best policy, and that ill-gotten gains are the devil's playthings."



CHAPTER CIX.

THE letter that thrilled the heart of the Captain while he was dictating it to Rake, reached England, and in due time was delivered at the Robinson residence—into the hands of Mrs. Robinson. Opening the letter as she had others addressed to Ruth, she commenced reading the contents.

“My God, he’s coming home! Something must be done at once.”

Sending a message to Rushton for him to call immediately, as soon as he arrived she handed him the letter.

Rushton did not mind in the least how she had obtained the information. They were truly “birds of a feather.”

After debating the matter it was decided that Mrs. Robinson should commence in the morning after her brother, the Doctor, had made his usual call, to coax Ruth to go through the ceremony without any further delay.

The following morning Mrs. Robinson explained to Ruth with tears in her eyes, that if she would only allow the wedding ceremony to take place at once, her father would get the Rushton law practice without any further delay; then she would be able to send Ruth’s younger brother and sister to college.

“The war office, the newspapers, and all my friends believe him dead. In my heart he still lives; but perhaps I am, as they all seem to think, laboring under a mental delusion,” mused Ruth.



“If I am laboring under this delusion, then he must be dead. Rake has never sent me any news of him. I suppose the dear fellow had not the heart when he could not send me anything definite. My poor father is nearly heartbroken, although through all our trials he has never urged me to marry any one. Last night when I spoke to him about Mr. Rushton, he said:

“‘My child, please the dictates of your own heart. My race is nearly run.’

“Those words of my father have decided me—I’ll marry Mr. Rushton and save my father from any further drudgery and worry. I’m deceiving no one. I told Mr. Rushton that I did not feel toward him as I should, he said he was satisfied. My lover is dead, and I’ve kept my promise that never while he lived would I marry another.”

Locking herself in her room, as was her wont on such occasions, we leave her to her meditations.



CHAPTER CX.

JACK, I'm as anxious as you are to hear from Rake. I gave him a letter of introduction to Lorraine and asked him to write immediately after he called on her. Yes, Jack, and every day seems a week until I can get away from here. As far as money is concerned, none of us need worry any more; we've got all we can use this side of the grave, and I never heard of them needing any on the other. Griddles will be able to run the whole concern after we get it a little more ship-shape. I did not tell you, Jack, that I popped the question while in England and received the little word that had bothered me so long; the refusal of which at the time I received your first letter was one of the reasons why I took you up so readily on your proposition to go into this mining speculation. I think, Jack, that a refusal from the woman you love—for the time being, at least, turns a fellow's head. When she wouldn't give me any satisfaction, I felt so desperate that I wanted to put the North Pole between us, and never go back to England again. You see, she has so many admirers; and among them are one or two with handles to their names—good fellows, mind you, but you know how such things count with the girls—and as I know only too well how fickle she is, I can never be sure of the honor of calling her mine until the knot is tied. I know that I'm a fool to bother with her, but the fact is I'm completely at her mercy. I have tried



to give her up; but that devilish, gnawing sensation keeps eating at my heart, and sleeping or waking it never leaves me. The only relief I got was when we were working night and day in the tunnel, and that was the reason why I paid no attention to you and Rake when you kept advising me to take my natural allowance of sleep; I wanted to try and forget her by doing the work of two men. I think you'll find when you meet her, Jack, that she's no butterfly; on the contrary she's brainy and talented, but being a society belle, and having so many suitors for her hand, it's made her vain, and at times she's perfectly ridiculous. Of course I see all this, but I love her, and believe when she's married all this will vanish, and she'll be fit to grace any mansion in England. However, Jack, you'll see her, and I want your candid opinion of my choice."

"She's given you her promise, Dick, and from what you have told me of her I believe no one will win her from you."

CHAPTER CXI.

RAKE'S letter announcing his home coming, and the name of the steamer he intended to sail by, arrived in England two days before he was due to arrive. The letter had not as was supposed gone by the steamer intended, having been mailed too late, in consequence it had lain in the post office until the departure of the next mail.



CHAPTER CXII.

IT IS the twentieth of June, the eve of Ruth's wedding day. Mrs. Robinson has notified the minister to be on hand, as for obvious reasons she did not wish her brother to perform the ceremony. The wedding, on account of Ruth's recent illness, was to be private, only the immediate members of the family being present; then was to follow a trip to Canne, France.

Mrs. Robinson and Rushton have made all arrangements for the morrow. Robinson was called into the parlor and notified by Rushton that he was to call at the office of the brewery on the following Monday, when Rushton's father would make the necessary arrangements for him to take charge of all their law work. Rushton intended to stay on the continent for a year, calculating that by the time Rake arrived in England he would be in Paris spending his honeymoon.

While Rushton and his consort are making the necessary arrangements for the morrow, Ruth is sitting in the quiet little study of her uncle's at the parsonage.

They talked over old times, and all the scenes and incidents that Ruth could remember, but both studiously avoided talking of the Captain. Ruth wished this night of calmness with her uncle could last forever—she dreaded the coming morrow. While she had nothing with which to reproach herself, she



knew in her heart and in the sight of God that while she was making the sacrifice for others—it was wrong to marry this man whom she did not love, and with her a wrong was always a wrong, and no glossing over could ever make it a right. Then she thought of all this man had done for the missions. She had given her word, and her word was her bond. The wedding must take place. The twelve months time she had exacted, after they had procured her promise, had expired. To-morrow she would sacrifice herself at the altar as others had done before. She slept little, if any, all night. Her thoughts had not been of that joyous elysium that brides experience on the eve of their wedding. She would doze for a few minutes, then suddenly awake in a fitful manner. Being tired out toward morning, sleep overcame her as her mother entered the room, saying:

“Not up yet, Ruth? Come, dear, I’m surprised at you sleeping at all on the eve of your wedding. Very few girls, Ruth, sleep on their nuptial eve.”

Ruth slowly awoke, staring at her mother without speaking. As she stared so intently her large expressive eyes had such an effect on her mother, that her guilty conscience smote her. Sitting on the edge of her daughter’s bed with arm encircling her neck, as with the other she smoothed back her tresses, remorse took possession of her with such irresistible force as to cause her to realize she was selling her daughter to the highest bidder. As she gazed once more on her child the enormity of the crime she was about to see consummated was such that this hardened woman for a second, a second only, thought of confessing all and stopping the wedding. A knock at the door brought

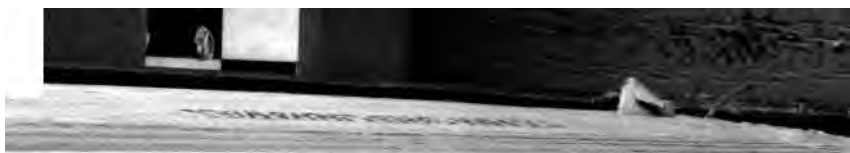


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her back in an instant to the stern reality of all that she had gone through to bring about this wedding.

As she opened the door in making her exit from the room, she turned abruptly to the bedside of Ruth, and encircling her neck with her arms, kissed her passionately—then fled from the room.

In a few minutes she regained her composure, and seeing Rushton, who had now arrived, she realized that at last her days of genteel poverty were over.



CHAPTER CXIII.

IN BOTH the letters that Rake wrote to Ruth, no mention was made of the Jack-Pot mine. Mrs. Robinson supposed that as they had both been in the army there was no possibility of their having any money besides their mere pittance of army pay. She imagined them as poor as the proverbial Job. Poverty was her nightmare. She dreaded it. She would risk the biblical saying of the difficulty of the rich entering the kingdom of heaven. What Ruth or anybody else thought, after the ceremony had taken place, she cared not. She wanted a rich husband for her daughter; and if Ruth was fool enough to pine her life away because she had not the pleasure of marrying a poor man, then she could pine away; she and her husband would in the meantime have feathered their nests at Rushton's expense. If Rake or the Captain exposed her when it was proved that she had received Ruth's letters—she would face it; no exposure that they could bring to bear on her would be half so gall-ing as the poverty she had endured. She was not going to sit in the corner for the remainder of her life darning her husband's socks. No,—she would leave that for the sentimentalists.



CHAPTER CXIV.

WITH a heavy heart, very different from her idea of a wedding day, as she had many times pictured it in her mind, Ruth began to dress for the wedding—assisted by her mother, who advised her to go through the ceremony in a dark gray traveling dress, so as to avoid the fatigue of changing.

The wedding was to take place in the little parlor of the Robinsons', no one being invited except one or two intimate friends.

While Ruth was dressing she called to her mother to bring an article she required in making her toilet. Getting no answer, she went to her mother's room, and in looking through one of the bureau drawers—her heart almost ceased beating at what she saw. She gasped—then recovering herself, saw before her eyes—a letter, yes, this was no dream—she now had it in her hand—and from *him*.

With brain on fire she grasped the letter and returned, staggering to her room.

Both letters sent to Ruth had been addressed by Captain Hardesty, although written by Rake at the Captain's dictation, he not daring to write on account of the uncertainty of whether she had married Rush-ton—thinking him dead.

Locking the door of her room, Ruth sat on the edge of her bed, as with an indescribable look on her countenance she began to read the contents of the letter. She had, as it were, stood on the brink of a precipice, and was saved by a miracle.

Reading the letter over twice, thrice, yes, half a dozen times, then realizing all, she knelt and thanked God from her heart for His kind deliverance from the awful step she had been on the verge of taking. She was about to rise in answer to the loud knocking at the door, when the great mental strain she had been under for the past year had its effect in the awakening. Rising half way, she swooned, falling prostrate to the floor—still clutching the letter.

Mrs. Robinson for safe keeping had carried the letter on her person and in changing her costume had, for the moment, placed it in the drawer, intending to destroy it as soon as she was dressed. Before she had time to finish arranging her toilet her husband came hastily into the room, telling her to hasten down stairs to attend to some function that demanded her immediate attention, and in her haste, she had forgotten to take the letter with her.

Mrs. Robinson, not getting an answer after repeatedly knocking at the door, commenced to call in bland tones:

"Ruth, open the door please; I wish to speak to you."

Ruth! for the time being was dead to the world. Mrs. Robinson could not understand the door being locked and Ruth's not answering her. She thought her daughter had one of her "spells," as she called it, whenever Ruth had demurred to any unreasonableness of her mother's.

Down in the little parlor, the few guests that were invited to the wedding were patiently awaiting the appearance of Ruth.

Seated by himself, and lost in reverie, was the Reverend Charles Anderson. He knew this wedding was

what his sister had planned and schemed for during the past year, and had noticed her anxious look as she left the parlor to see that Ruth was not wanting for anything to finish her toilet.

While waiting in the parlor, the Doctor thought he heard some one calling Ruth. Going into the hall and listening, he could hear his sister knocking on Ruth's door and calling without receiving any answer.

"Is there anything wrong, sister?"

"Ruth has her door locked and I can't get any answer from her," replied Mrs. Robinson in subdued tones to her brother.

Going upstairs, he said:

"What do you suppose is the matter?"

"I don't know, unless she has taken one of those dreadful whims; she is acting just like a school girl."

"Sister, Ruth is above anything like what you speak of; however, I'll find out the cause of her silence."

Mrs. Robinson's brother, the Reverend Charles Anderson, was possibly the only person in the world whom she feared. She knew what a perfectly God-fearing man he was, and she had visions of Ruth's backing out from going through the ceremony, knowing that if she made the slightest hesitation, and her uncle saw it, the wedding would never take place.

"Charles, you had better leave this matter to me, and go downstairs—do so like a good brother; Ruth will get over this and would feel embarrassed if she saw you at such a time."

"Sister, I can't go down stairs until I find out if anything is the matter with the child. Ruth, 'tis I who call—come, dear, open the door; I wish to speak to you." No answer.

"Are you sure she's in the room, sister?"

"I'm positive, Charles."

"Then I'll burst open the door; I can't stand this any longer. Something has happened."

Bracing himself, he threw all his weight against the door and with such force that it flew back with a bang.

There they found her, lying full length on the floor, her hand tightly clasping the letter, which was partly covered by the folds of her dress.

Brother and sister were on their knees in an instant beside the prostrate girl. Mrs. Robinson gave a start and placed her hand to her heart. The Doctor, releasing Ruth's hand, turned to Mrs. Robinson, saying:

"Do you feel faint, sister? I'm afraid you've received a shock; better call James."

"It's nothing, Charles, I'm all right now," replied Mrs. Robinson.

She had received the greatest shock she had been called upon to bear for some time—the sight of the Captain's letter in Ruth's hand—hence the heart spasm. While her brother called for Ruth's father, Mrs. Robinson instantly wrenched the tell-tale letter from her daughter's hand.

Dr. Richards being hastily summoned, found Ruth surrounded by those who had been invited to the wedding.

In a few minutes Ruth revived, and after staring around in a vacant manner, said:

"Don't leave me, uncle—the Captain and Rake are coming home. Take me to the parsonage."

The Doctor was a lion in a moment. Never would he allow the wedding to take place.



He now surely thought his niece had at last lost her reason through brooding over her absent lover and the thought of marrying Rushton. As yet Ruth in her excitement had not mentioned the letter.

Mrs. Robinson and Rushton wanted the ceremony to take place at once, but the Doctor would not listen to such a thing.

While the discussion was going on, Ruth told her uncle how she had found the letter from Rake, and that he would be home in a day or two. The last thing she remembered was that after reading the letter there came a knock at the door which brought her back to realize, now that the Captain was alive, the precipice upon which she had been standing, and how near she came to falling into the unknown depths.

The Reverend Charles Anderson now surmised the cause of his sister's sudden pang when she first came into the room and saw Ruth lying on the floor. She had never left the room and must have the letter about her person. Going to her he asked her in a whisper what she had done with the letter.

Mrs. Robinson, instead of answering her brother, walked into the hallway, followed by Rushton. Being again interrogated by her brother for the letter, Mrs. Robinson faced him in a determined manner, exclaiming:

"Letter! Letter! What do you mean?"

"I mean the letter that you took out of Ruth's hand when you knelt beside her on the floor," replied her brother in a firm and determined manner.

Mrs. Robinson had had no chance to tell Rushton of the state of affairs; but when he heard Ruth's uncle ask about the letter, in his heat he cursed Mrs. Rob-



inson for not destroying both of them when she had read them.

"You're taking great liberties, Charles, to talk to me like this."

"I have your child's interest and happiness at heart; and there has been a letter, and perhaps more than one, that she never received, and I demand that she now have the letters returned to her at once."

At this juncture Robinson appeared, and as he did so Mrs. Robinson brushed past the others present.

Ruth's uncle, surmising that Mrs. Robinson would destroy the letter, followed her. As she was about to enter her own room she turned, and seeing her brother following her, attempted to lock the door, as he threw out his arms, forcing it open.

Putting his hand on her shoulder, he demanded the letter which she now held crumpled in her hand.

Caught red-handed—true to her disposition, she defied her brother, and warned him not to come near her at his peril.

Under the garb of the holy orders which he wore stood a man in the Reverend Charles Anderson, as fearless in the cause of truth and righteousness as ever lived; and if instead of it being his sister, it had been some desperado, he would have been equally as determined.

"I want that letter and will have it. It belongs to Ruth and you have no right to it."

All the grand expectations that Mrs. Robinson had planned and lain awake nights to mature, were now cast down at her feet—the vase was broken into a thousand pieces; it never could be repaired. Instead of a deep humiliation at being found out in such unmotherly conduct, and forgetting that the Doctor had

not been the means of stopping the wedding—it being the tell-tale letter—this woman, seeing nothing but a life of poverty before her—then her shame glaring before her eyes at being caught at the trickery she had practiced on her daughter—passion for the time being drove her insane.

We will close the door on what took place in the room, but in a short time the reverend gentleman emerged with the letter torn into quite a number of pieces.

Going to Ruth he said :

“Get your cloak, child, and come with me at once to the parsonage.” Turning to the assembled guests, he said :

“Friends, there’ll be no wedding here to-day.”

“By what right, sir, do you stop this wedding?” demanded Rushton.

“I’ve no right, nor am I stopping it. My niece, whose life is my life, has asked me to take her to my home; if she is willing for the ceremony to proceed, I’ve nothing to say. I believe, sir, when my niece promised to be your wife, she and everybody else believed Captain Hardesty to be dead.”

“It’s an undisputed fact that the man’s dead,” exclaimed Rushton.

“He lives, sir, and will be here inside of two weeks. Mr. Rakeman, who has been with him, will be here to-morrow—I have the proof here,” he said, exhibiting the letter.

“You damned meddling parson! I’ve a good mind to brain you! You’ve been at the bottom of all this mischief,” exclaimed Rushton, trembling with rage.

“Keep your temper, sir, or I may forget my cloth and give you the chastisement you so richly deserve.”



CHAPTER CXV.

THE Doctor and Ruth passed the most joyous night they had known since the farewell of the Captain for the seat of war. Rake was due on the morrow, bringing, as he would, all the news of the Captain; and the Captain would be home in a week or ten days. Oh, could it be true? How Ruth thanked God! She was afraid of going to bed for fear she should awake and find it some horrid nightmare. She must sit up and think. She shuddered when she thought of how she had been saved by a miracle from a worse fate than the grave when she knew the Captain lived. It was God that guided her footsteps to that drawer; of that she was sure.

In her room at the parsonage with the Captain's letter which she had pieced together and read we know not how many times, sat Ruth. Sleep was out of the question. All night long she paced up and down the room thinking of her lover, and all that had transpired since their separation.

The morning came; she read the letter once more which said *he* was coming. Oh, how joyous were her thoughts. After her bath she went to her uncle's study and waited his coming to breakfast. He and Ruth had sat up very late the night before, and the Doctor was now taking his natural allowance of sleep. Ruth could not sit still. She went down into the kitchen and had a long talk with the Doctor's cook, asking about her son Mike. The good old soul told her that she expected him every day, as she had re-

ceived a letter from him stating that he was coming; that he had received his stripes and been presented with a medal.

"Begorra, I thought when I read Mike's letter and he said that he had received his stripes, that he had got into some trouble and they had bate him; but Dennis the gardener tells me, he has been raised in the ranks."

Ruth kissed her and told her how happy she was, and that she would soon have the pleasure of cooking that dinner she had promised the Captain on his return. She went into what little details she knew from Rake's letter; also telling the cook she must introduce her to her son Mike on his return.

"That I will, child; and it's a pleasure to know that he has those stripes. I was afraid, as I told you, that Mike had got into some trouble, as he was the very divil when a boy, and was always in mischief. The army must be a good place, as it's the only job he ever held—couldn't hold any of them for his divil-mint."



CHAPTER CXVI.

RAY, jovial, talkative, whole-souled Rake arrived the day after the scenes which took place in the last chapter. He drove straight to the parsonage, for he knew that Ruth, if nothing had happened, would most likely be there, and if it had, he would get all the particulars from her uncle. His welcome was such that he would not be likely to forget it the longest day he lived.

“Wonderful, wonderful—never heard anything like it! I can see God’s hand in all this,” said the Doctor, as Rake unfolded the story of the Captain’s discovery and the great success of the mining enterprise. “He is rewarding the faithful, and his servant here (as he patted Ruth affectionately), is to reap the harvest of her steadfastness. At last your dear father’s troubles, Ruth, are all over. You will also be able to heap coals of fire on your mother’s head.”

Excusing himself, and telling them he would be back in ten minutes, Rake hurried to the telegraph office and sent a cable to a gentleman who was some five thousand miles away, and who, no doubt, was counting the hours until he received it.



CHAPTER CXVII.

WHEN the cablegram from Rake to the Captain arrived, he was sitting smoking his pipe with Sanders. With a forced smile he tossed the message to his chum, exclaiming:

"Damn it, Dick, I'm afraid—open it and read me the verdict—my nerve has left me."

The look on the Captain's face during the few seconds that it took Sanders to open the envelope was such that, if it had not been such a serious affair, would have been amusing. Never did man exhibit such fear—that innocent little paper in his friend's hand almost stopped the beating of his heart. Young men in their first love are almost as confiding as girls. So it was with the Captain and Sanders. They had lauded to the skies the object of their hearts' desire, each thinking he had the one bright star locked up in that tender receptacle—of course the other young lady was very nice, but the equal of the Venus he had chosen to share his joys and sorrows—of course not—she did not exist—there was only one, and he possessed her.

"Dick, I've died a thousand deaths since you opened that envelope." (To Sanders, who was laughing heartily at the cablegram in his hand.) "What's the verdict?"

"Come, Dick, old fellow, read me the words."

"Patience, patience, my noble duke."

"Patience be d—d, Dick; the words!"

"The words, sir, are '*All serene, speed home.*'"



Which words had been agreed upon by the Captain and Rake before his departure for England—if Ruth had not married.

“If you only knew, Dick—”

“Not a word, Jack, old boy; I understand. I’m in the same boat myself,” said Sanders, as he grasped the hand of his old college chum. “The cynics may say what they like, Jack, but the only way to true happiness in this world is to marry the woman you love.”

As quickly as the cable could return an answer, one came from the Captain, stating what steamer he would take from New York. Then in ten days another cable came from Queenstown. He would be in Liverpool the following day. It was hard to say who was the more excited, Ruth or the Doctor.



CHAPTER CXVIII.

THE Doctor and Ruth seemed as if they were afraid to lose sight of Rake; and in the gladness of Rake's heart there was joy at the thought that he had been the means of restoring the bloom to the cheek of the companion of his childhood days.

Taking the midnight train to London two days after he arrived in Oxton, Rake made his way to the palatial residence of Sir Archibald Fairbrother, where he was ushered into a reception room, beside which any he had seen or heard of, paled into insignificance.

When Sanders gave Rake the letter of introduction to the fair Lorice, and asked him to call upon her, he hardly knew why he did so. It was a silly piece of business; but he was very, very jealous of the fair Lorice, and don't we all do silly things at such times?

Lorice Fairbrother looked on Rake as a very nice young man, but lacking the polish of the city swell. "A little provincial," she thought. This pet of London's society sat and amused herself with Rake until it was time for him to leave. If the London society people were all like the fair Lorice, he did not want to meet any more of them. Rake was a little out of his class. He had not been reared in the lap of luxury, where meeting the most prominent people in all England and treating your inferiors with condescension was the daily program.

Rake sat on the edge of a chair in the reception room, while the fair Lorice toyed with her fan, cross-examined and picked him to pieces with a nicety that was perfectly charming. She, although barely



twenty-one, was schooled in diplomacy. Why shouldn't she be? A brainy girl, although spoiled from birth by a rich inheritance, and being the only child, had been toadied to such an extent that the wonder was that she was at all bearable. Most all the dowagers of London's society had at different times made a pet of her; then listening to all the diplomacy of which these fair dames were possessed, and being allowed in the room with her father during conferences with other diplomats,—all together Lorice Fairbrother deserved great credit for being as tolerant as she was.

Rake could not understand her, and was pleased when the interview was over. He refused point blank to stay for luncheon or allow her to have a carriage got ready for him—no, he had a few places to call, he said, and would much prefer to walk. He had commenced to call Sanders by his first name, while Lorice called him Mr. Sanders; then he began to call him Mr. Sanders; then would forget and commence in speaking of him by calling him Di—, then correcting himself, call him Mr. Sanders. Altogether he did not enjoy his visit. He had anticipated being brought into the family circle with great gusto, and held up as the companion of Sanders who had shared the trials of the stupendous undertaking of the Jack-Pot mine tunnel. He breathed freer when outside of the palatial residence, and as he made his way to the cable office, began to compare Lorice with Ruth, and if Miss Lorice Fairbrother could have read the thoughts of this young Saw-bones, she would no doubt have been greatly amused.

As Rake departed from the Fairbrother mansion, Lorice ordered a carriage to be immediately got ready. While waiting for the carriage she sat and thought.

She loved Dick Sanders. She admired him above all the many admirers she had ever known; but as a patriot she had been schooled to hide her emotions. Rake had amused her. She admired Dick Sanders all the more for the work he had undertaken in developing this mine. He had shown he had pluck on two occasions; one in leaving her the first time and going out to the States, and then going back to finish the work he had undertaken, instead of lounging around the London drawing rooms.

Rake sent a cablegram to Sanders, stating that he guessed everything was lovely. If Mr. Rakeman had been detained half an hour before he arrived at the cable office, he would there have seen an elegant carriage and team with the arms of Sir Archibald Fairbrother emblazoned on the panels, and one of the daintiest of London's pretty girls step into the office and send a cablegram to Mr. Richard Sanders which bore the words: "Have had an interview with Mr. Rakeman. Charming gentleman. Have written. Lorice."

Sanders knew just about what Lorice would think of Rake, and laughed heartily when he received the cablegram.

Love is love, whether in palace or cottage. There is no difference. True love is true love. Our hearts are all the same, and the craving must be satisfied no matter what our station in life. True, the refinement and pride of the upper classes help to screen them from the vulgar gaze, but nothing can suppress the gnawing of the heart for the object of its desire. The fire must burn itself out, the sufferer having the one consolation that no one can gaze on the flame—it is hidden from the eyes of all, and we bear our cross after our own fashion.



CHAPTER CXIX.

THE Cunard tender is puffing and snorting and making the best of its way against a six-knot current of the flood tide in the river Mersey to meet the leviathan Etruria, which is within sight of the New Brighton Lighthouse.

On board the tender our friends are assembled. All radiant; all smiles; all anxious to get a glimpse of Captain Hardesty, who is on the in-coming steamer.

Kissing Ruth fervently, then shaking hands with the Doctor, Robinson and Rake, and while trying to answer the multitude of questions which are asked of him, the tender is at the landing-stage before the Captain realizes the fact that they have cast off from the liner.

Allowing his baggage to go to the custom house, the Captain and the rest of the party board the Woodside ferry boat for Birkenhead, and proceed direct to the parsonage.

After everything had been explained to the Captain by the Doctor, and while the preparations for the wedding are under way, and the lovers are having a few days to talk over matters, as only lovers can, and while the Doctor is wondering when Ruth and the Captain will ever stop talking, Mrs. O'Malley, the Doctor's cook, is begging the Doctor's pardon for bothering him in asking if it took three days to come from London to Birkenhead, as how Mike, her son, had returned from the war, and that she had received



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a letter three days ago that he was leaving London the night he mailed the letter, for Birkenhead. Mike, who arrived the next day, explained to his mother that he had stopped in to take "just one" before he boarded the train, and meeting some of the boys who had served in the 'teenth, they had made a night of it. Giving all of our friends a little time to talk over the events that have taken place, we will turn to a young person with whom we are to become better acquainted.



CHAPTER CXX.

MISS BERTHA TRAVERS, the niece of Royal, had been in the habit, ever since she was placed in the Westchester Seminary, of spending her holidays with the parents of her school companion, the Scotts, who resided a few doors from the Dakota Apartments on West Seventy-second Street, New York City. Miss Scott and Bertha had been school chums ever since they had met at the seminary, and when the fact became known to the Scotts that Bertha was an orphan, they took a parental interest in her. Bertha in the meantime had completely won their hearts by her sincere attachment to them. When the news came of the death of her uncle, and she was notified that everything was left to her, the Scotts decided that, as they intended taking a European trip, they would accompany Bertha and act as her chaperon while she conducted her business with the London lawyers in reference to her uncle's estate.

Now it so happened that Rake on his voyage home was a passenger on the same steamer as the Scotts and Miss Travers. For the first twenty-four hours after the steamer left the West Street dock, New York, Rake was bubbling over with pleasurable excitement. He was thinking of the grand time he would have unraveling to Ruth, the Doctor and other immediate friends, the mystery of the Captain's resurrection. After this had passed through his mind he began to think of his lost loved one, Ruth.



In this fitful mood, verging from the depths of despair at losing Ruth; then soaring, as was his nature, to untold heights, he was introduced to the Scotts; then followed an introduction to their daughter; then to Miss Travers.

Rake soon found out that Miss Scott was a very self-important young lady, who wished to convey to him a little of her importance. On the other hand, Miss Travers had a very sympathetic nature; a retiring disposition; and pleased at all times to listen to others. This trio, like most well-bred people, pretended to, and did, enjoy themselves as much as three young persons ever do under such circumstances. Mrs. Scott at last came to the rescue of Rake and Miss Travers by calling her daughter to assist her in some fancy work she was engaged in doing, thus giving Rake the opportunity he so ardently desired. These two young people in a very short time had learned the history of each other's life. Then Rake unfolded to her the romance of Captain Hardesty and his own undying love for Ruth,—and Miss Travers told him what a noble fellow he was, and our gallant Rake believed her, and told her he knew he could never love another, at hearing which, Miss Travers sighed. After this they met quite often—indeed, we might say they were always together. They had seats next to each other at the dining table; they found the most quiet nooks, and Rake at such times as he sheltered Miss Travers with his steamer rug, would compare her with Ruth. Once when the conversation lagged, Miss Travers, in extending her sympathy, told him she was sure he was thinking of Ruth, and how sorry she was for him, and as she gazed on him with her large

soulful eyes, told him, time and again, that there never lived such a noble fellow—and she should know—why shouldn't she? She was eighteen.

We are sure that our gallant Rake was not at all displeased at hearing his praises sung by this fair young American. The last night on board of the steamer they had the most secluded spot and sat up very late, and Mrs. Scott had sent her daughter to ask Bertha to please come to her cabin, and Rake answered and told her Miss Travers would come presently, and Miss Scott left in anything but an amiable mood. Then did Rake seize his opportunity and tell Miss Travers that if she would accept a heart crushed so bitterly as his had been, she could call it her own. Bertha, though very, very shy and demure, told Mr. Rakeman that she was sure she could repair the damage to that tender spot of the anatomy. Rake, after making his declaration, felt a little guilty when he thought of Ruth, as he was sure she had read his heart, and now what would she think of him engaging himself to another,—and in such a short time; but had not Bertha's sympathy been the means of saving him from dying of a broken heart, he reasoned again and again to convince himself that he was just a little different than other men of his temperament.

While this violent love affair of Rake's with Miss Travers was going on, the Scotts had not failed to notice it, besides a goodly number of other passengers, who called them the "two spoonies."

Miss Scott was shocked at Bertha's conduct, from the moment Rake had shown his preference for Miss Travers, and told her mamma time and again that Rake was horrid. She knew, she said, he was a fortune hunter, and only wanted to marry Bertha so as to

obtain her money. Mrs. Scott was rather amused, as she could afford to be, and in her motherly solicitude was glad that Rake had not taken kindly to her daughter, as he appeared to be a nobody. She thought that the present love-making with Bertha and Rake was merely a steamer flirtation, which would evaporate as soon as the respective parties left the steamer and took up their different rounds of business and pleasure. Not so with Rake. He was young and sincere and begged to be allowed to call on them in London, whither they were going to spend the season with a sister of Mrs. Scott's, who had married a wealthy English barrister.

When the excitement of the Captain's arrival had somewhat abated, and the preparations were going on for the wedding, then did Rake unfold to them all about his love affair on the steamer. The good natured joking that followed, no one taking it seriously, was amusing.

"Bring her on, Rake, then you and the Captain can go through the ceremony together," replied the Doctor.

"Capital, by Jove!" smilingly replied the Captain.

"You all think this is a joke, don't you? She is young and can't very well have a past, and I've seen enough of her that after Mrs. Scott gives her consent, I'll make a go of it."

"Might as well, Rake," continued the Captain, smiling.

"I'm going to London as soon as your little affair is over to call on her and ask her foster mother's consent, as I have already obtained hers."

"What! Is she an orphan?" asked the Captain.

"Oh, how I would like her for a sister," replied Ruth.

"Well, I'll know my fate in a day or two," continued Rake, as he left the room.



CHAPTER CXXI.

IT IS the wedding day of the Captain and Ruth. The cozy little study of the Doctor's never seemed brighter. The few intimate friends of Ruth, who have been true to her all through her many trials, are there. Everything being ready, her uncle, who is to perform the ceremony, has said a short prayer before proceeding, when to the utter consternation of those present, there entered the little parlor, without any ceremony, a corporal and two private soldiers of the British army. They were in full marching order, and had a warrant for the arrest of Captain Hardesty for desertion in the face of her Majesty's enemies, for which a court-martial could, if the charge was proved, order death as the penalty.

Ruth, with a cry of anguish resembling some dumb animal in its plaintiveness, threw her arms around the neck of the Captain.

Telling the assembled guests that everything would come out all right, and for them not to be alarmed, the Captain disengaged himself from Ruth's embrace and prepared to accompany the men.

"This is the work of that cursed hound, Rushton," said Rake. "If I meet him I won't be responsible for anything that may happen."

"Quiet, Rake, quiet; old boy; all can be explained," replied Captain Hardesty.

That night the Captain journeyed to Aldershot with his captors, accompanied by Rake.

The officers that comprised the court martial listened with rapt attention to the romantic career of the Captain since the battle of Spion's Kop, and after a preliminary examination the trial was postponed for a month, Captain Hardesty being paroled.

Sanders was immediately notified by cable, and leaving the mine in charge of Griddles, at once made his way to New York and took the first steamer for England.

Rake, during the time Sanders was making his way to England, and while the Captain was waiting for the trial, was making rapid strides in his love affair with Miss Bertha Travers.

Mrs. Scott, thinking it the caprice of a young man's first love, did not take Rake's courtship seriously, despite the earnest pleadings of Rake, who had during the short time won Bertha over; but when Sanders arrived, and Rake told him the state of affairs, the first thing he did was to call on the Scotts. Then followed the rounds of the most exclusive smart set of London, Mrs. Scott realizing for the first time that all the prestige lay on the side of Rake. Then Sanders, who was somewhat of a man of the world, had a friendly chat with Mrs. Scott, telling her that while Miss Travers might have a decent little fortune, it was a mere pittance compared with Rake's interest in the Jack-Pot mine.

Mrs. Scott, when she saw the grand connections Rake had, and the amount of his wealth, hoped that Mr. Sanders would not think her mercenary, as she was only taking a motherly interest in the orphan. Of course Sanders, the diplomat, who had improved wonderfully under the mentorship of the only Griddles, told her what a good Samaritan she was.

The upshot of all this was that our friend Rake was allowed to go the even tenor of his way in the wooing of the pretty American.

At the court martial Doctor Steward told on examination that when the Captain was put on board of the steamer he was not in a state of mind to know what he was doing. Mr. Rakeman was going to the States, and under his (the Doctor's) advice, he thought it better for the Captain to accompany him, as the voyage being long, the pure sea air would be the best means of his recovery.

The Captain then stated on his own behalf that he knew he ought to have notified the authorities and obtained leave of absence after the operation had been performed, but as everyone thought him dead he decided to allow them to think so, giving as his reason for so doing circumstances that he did not wish to divulge to anyone, even if his life was to pay the forfeit.

The officers who constituted the court martial had the record of Captain Hardesty before them, showing as it did what a brave officer he was; also the fact that he had been mentioned twice in dispatches and was named for the Victoria cross for his bravery in carrying off the field of action a wounded soldier under the deadly fire of the Boer sharpshooters. It was very evident that this austere body of men had their minds made up as to the verdict, but the majesty of the British service must be upheld.

Summing up, they found Captain Hardesty had always been a true soldier of the Queen, laying great stress on the Doctor's testimony that the Captain was "*non compos mentis*" when taken on board the steamer; then recommended him for the promotion he so richly deserved.



CHAPTER CXXII.

HELLO, Dartmoor!"

"Dick, old boy, when the devil did you get back? Well, I see she's a winner. You've got the right stuff in you, Dick. It certainly was a great undertaking. When I sent in my order for that hundred shares I had no more idea than the man in the moon that the mine or the tunnel would ever amount to anything. I just bought that hundred shares to boost your project along, knowing that you and an old friend of mine, Robinson, were deeply interested in the undertaking. I was all cut up when I arrived here in the city to hear what had taken place. By gad, Dick, whoever would have thought that Rushton would have acted the poltroon as he did? But it's as the governor says, 'a man must pass through the fire before his metal is tested.' They all say it was he who put the war office on Hardesty's track as soon as he arrived in England."

"I'm going to leave to-night, Dartmoor, for Oxtou, Birkenhead; Rake and I go together. Now, you know these young people, why not come along? Hardesty gets married to-morrow, and you know they would all be delighted to see you."

"Dick, I've been lying low for some time watching events. I never was so hard hit in all my life as I was over Ruth Robinson. I saw Rushton hadn't a thousand to one chance. It was very evident this Captain Hardesty, whom I have never met, had won her completely. Then I heard that he had been bowled over in the battle of Spion's Kop. As a feeler, to find out how the land lay, I wrote to Rushton, and he answered saying he

was engaged to her and would notify me when it was to come off. If Rushton had not been an old friend of mine he would have had to take his chances, as I certainly would have cut in and tried my best to win her. However, I'll accompany you, as I'd like to meet Captain Hardesty," replied the Earl.

A vulgar and mean affair took place at the Robinson residence. It seems that when the verdict of acquittal of Captain Hardesty had been rendered, Rushton, who knew his dastardly conduct would become known, and that in consequence he would be a despised man, made arrangements to sail for New Zealand. Sending his baggage to the steamer, so as to be able to board her at the last moment without any delay, he then drove to the Robinson residence in a beastly state of intoxication. Getting out of his carriage, he swaggered to the door and rang the bell. Brushing past the maid who opened it, he walked into the family circle of the Robinsons; then in a low and vulgar manner called Mrs. Robinson a cheat and a schemer, winding up with the choicest billingsgate as he told how he had kept the whole damned family for over a year. He defied the reverend gentleman, who was present; also Robinson, calling him a swindler and a great deal more, not at all edifying.

Ruth, who was present, shuddered when she thought that, but for the hand of God, she would have been married to this man. It all came out where Mrs. Robinson had been getting the money since the Robinson failure.

Belching forth a final volley of profanity, Rushton dashed out of the house more like a drunken rowdy than a college-bred gentleman; and we see him for the last time as he boards the steamer for New Zealand.



CHAPTER CXXIII.

THE wedding at last took place. After the ceremony there was a little good-natured rivalry between Sanders and the Earl as to where the Captain and Ruth would spend their honeymoon. They both offered their country seats, as they knew from past experience (both of them being old widowers) that at such times people did not wish to be annoyed with visitors.

“Old Jack-Pot” is on his feet again, so everybody said; and Dame Gossip is often right.

Robinson has bought back his residence from the people who foreclosed the mortgage, they not being able to sell on account of the high price asked.

Since the day of her exposure, Mrs. Robinson has been a changed woman. Her indomitable will power seems crushed. She now speaks in subdued tones. The great strain she has undergone for the past year, followed by her own and Rushton’s exposure, has evidently undermined her constitution. She finally took to her bed, where the Doctor, her brother, was ever at her side. Shyly, at first, she listened to him; then by degrees this good man’s pleading for a lost soul broke down her callousness of heart, and on recovering from her sickness she took an active part in the mission work daily visiting these places with the Doctor, her carriage generally carrying some delicacies for the sick.



CHAPTER CXXIV.

DEMPSEY'S time has expired. His wife and Robinson receive him with open arms as he emerges from the prison gates. He is brought on to Birkenhead, where a family reunion takes place, and the fatted calf is killed. He is now a very different man from the Dempsey we formerly knew. All arrogance has left him.

Robinson has loaned Dempsey all the money that is necessary for him to start in business again. It is now a pleasure to go into his office; and his wife no longer dreads but joyfully awaits his home coming each evening.



CHAPTER CXXV.

AT ONE of London's most fashionable churches, on a Saturday morning one month after the marriage of Captain Hardesty, a special early marriage service is taking place, so as to give the parties time to make connection with the Liverpool steamer for New York.

Our young friend, Surgeon Rakeman, is leading to the altar Miss Bertha Travers. The Scotts, Earl Dartmoor, Captain Hardesty and wife (*nee* Miss Ruth Robinson) and Richard Sanders, of Jack-Pot fame, are all present; also a sprinkling of London's smart set.

When the gay wedding party arrived at the Prince's Landing Stage, Liverpool, Robinson, Dempsey, and all of Rake's friends from Oxton were on hand. A jolly time ensued until the last bell rang—then—hands grasped tightly—to be immediately unclasped—farewells are exchanged between friends, who, perhaps, may never meet again. Oh! how our hearts go out to them as we see the steamer bearing them away!

*the
pyre
is
burning* Wishing our gay and manly young friend and wife bon voyage, we take leave of them with best wishes for their future happiness.

The wedding of the fair Lorice, the daughter of Sir Archibald Fairbrother, to Richard Sanders, Esquire, has already been announced by all the fashionable society journals of London to take place in June.

THE END.







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